Romans

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- **Synopsis on the Book Romans**

Romans 1 Page -28

Romans is the first New Testament epistle — a personal letter, remarkable because the Old Testament contains no true letters (only embedded ones). Letters are private (enveloped), intended for specific recipients — here, believers only. God has distanced Himself from the world since Christ's resurrection: He hides, the Light has gone out, the world lives in darkness. New Testament books come as letters to believers, not the world.

Verses 1–7 — Greeting & sender:

- Paul, servant (doulos = slave) of Jesus Christ, called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (v. 1).
    - Formerly separated as Pharisee for law; now separated for gospel.
    - Gospel = glad tidings of promised fulfilment (prophets, holy scriptures) — concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (vv. 2–3).
- Made of seed of David according to flesh (v. 3); declared (appointed/ordained) Son of God with power by resurrection from dead, according to spirit of holiness (v. 4).
    - Son = heir/successor; resurrection = appointment as Son/Heir (Ps 2:7 fulfilled, Acts 13:33).
- Received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations (v. 5).
- To all in Rome, beloved of God, called saints: grace and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ (v. 7).

Verses 8–15 — Paul's longing for Rome:

- Their faith spoken of throughout the whole world (v. 8) — reputation of strong faith (likely British royal family in Rome; Palatium Britannicum → early church).
- Serves God with spirit in gospel of His Son; prays without ceasing (v. 9).
- Longs to visit, impart spiritual gift to establish them (v. 11); mutual comfort by shared faith (v. 12).
- Planned often but hindered; wants fruit among them as among other Gentiles (v. 13).
- Debtor to Greeks (civilized/Roman world) & Barbarians (uncivilized/outside empire), wise & unwise (v. 14).
- Ready to preach gospel in Rome (v. 15).

Verses 16–17 — Theme of epistle:

- Not ashamed of gospel of Christ — power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes; to Jew first, also Greek (v. 16).
- In it righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith (as written: just shall live by faith, Hab 2:4) (v. 17).
- Gospel = message of Christ's resurrection/appointment as Son/Heir; power because God's righteousness (faithfulness to promises) is revealed.

- Salvation by faith (obedience to faith); righteousness from Christ's faith → upon all who believe.

Verses 18–32 — God's wrath & man's unrighteousness:

- Wrath of God revealed from heaven against ungodliness/unrighteousness of men who hold truth in unrighteousness (v. 18).
- God manifest in creation (eternal power/Godhead clearly seen/understood); without excuse (v. 20).
- Knew God but glorified Him not, nor thankful; became vain in imaginations, foolish heart darkened (v. 21).
- Professed wise → became fools; changed glory of incorruptible God into image of corruptible man/beasts (v. 23).
- God gave them up three times (vv. 24, 26, 28):
    - To uncleanness through lusts (dishonour bodies) (v. 24).
    - To vile affections (homosexuality — symptomatic of rejecting Creator/creation order) (vv. 26–27).
    - To reprobate mind (doing inconvenient things) (v. 28).
- Filled with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness… covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful (vv. 29–31).
- Know God's judgment (worthy of death) yet do it and take pleasure in others who do (v. 32).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 1

- Letter form — Private to believers; God distanced from world (hides since resurrection); epistles = light in darkness for called saints.
- Gospel of God — Promised in prophets/scriptures; concerns Son Jesus Christ — appointed Son of God by resurrection (heir/power/endless life).
- Power unto salvation — Righteousness of God revealed (His faithfulness to promises); from faith (Christ's) to faith (ours); just lives by faith.
- Wrath & unrighteousness — Man knew God (creation) but rejected → vain imaginations, darkened heart → God gave up to uncleanness/vile affections/reprobate mind.
- Idolatry's fruit — Replace Creator with creature → disorder in relationships (homosexuality as symptom); filled with every evil; know judgment yet approve it.
- Paul's ministry — Servant/apostle separated unto gospel; debtor to all; ready to preach in Rome (strong faith/reputation).

Romans 1 highlights Paul as slave/apostle, separated for gospel of God (promised, fulfilled in Christ's resurrection/sonship); power unto salvation (righteousness revealed); man's unrighteousness (knew God but rejected → God gave up to corruption); wrath against holding truth in unrighteousness — setting stage for justification by faith (Christ's faithfulness → ours).

Romans 2: Page - 43

Romans 2 continues directly from 1:18–32 (wrath revealed against unrighteousness). Man judges others while doing the same things — therefore inexusable (v. 1).

- Thou condemnest thyself — judging another condemns self (v. 1).
- God's judgment is according to truth against those who commit such things (v. 2).
- Thinkest thou shalt escape God's judgment? (v. 3) — no escape.

Verse 4 — Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance, longsuffering?

- God's goodness (grace/mercy) leads to repentance — not to be despised.
- Longsuffering = postponement of wrath (day of salvation/acceptable time now).
- Use this grace now; come to repentance while it is offered.

Verse 5 — Hardness and impenitent heart treasures up wrath against day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment.

- Not present punishment (God withholds now), but future — day of wrath.
- Impenitence builds wrath-pile; longer life = greater accountability.

Verse 6 — God will render to every man according to his deeds (future tense).

- Works reveal heart (faith or unbelief).
- God judges secrets of men (not outward/person, but inward/heart) by Jesus Christ according to Paul's gospel (v. 16).

Verse 11 — No respect of persons with God — no partiality (looks at heart, not outward/person/works alone).

Verses 12–13 —

- Sinned without law → perish without law.
- Sinned in the law → judged by the law.
- Not hearers of law are just, but doers of the law shall be justified.
- Law makes more responsible (cannot plead ignorance); doers justified (but none do it perfectly).

Verses 14–15 — Gentiles (no law) who by nature do things in law become law unto themselves — work of law written in hearts, conscience bearing witness, thoughts accusing/excusing (v. 15).

- Conscience = co-knowledge (with God); innate sense of right/wrong.
- Gentiles without law still accountable (heart/conscience accuses/excuses).

Verses 17–24 — Direct address to Jew:

- Called Jew, rest in law, boast in God, know His will, approve excellent things, instructed in law (vv. 17–18).
- Confident guide to blind, light to darkness, instructor of foolish, teacher of babes — form of knowledge/truth in law (vv. 19–20).
- Yet teachest not self; preachest no stealing but stealest; no adultery but committest; abhorrest idols but committest sacrilege (vv. 21–22).
- Boast in law but break law → dishonour God (v. 23).
- Name of God blasphemed among Gentiles through you (v. 24; Isa 52:5).

Verses 25–29 — Circumcision (outward/Jewish identity):

- Profits if keep law; breaker of law → circumcision made uncircumcision (v. 25).
- Uncircumcision (Gentiles) keeps righteousness of law → uncircumcision counted circumcision (v. 26).
- Uncircumcision judges thee who transgress law by letter/circumcision (v. 27).
- Not Jew outwardly, nor circumcision outward in flesh (v. 28).
- Jew inwardly; circumcision of heart, in spirit not letter; praise of God, not men (v. 29; Deut 10:16; 30:6).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 2

- Inexcusable judgment — Judging others condemns self (do same things); no escape from God's righteous judgment.

- God's goodness leads to repentance — Riches of goodness/forbearance/longsuffering (grace) now; despising it treasures wrath for day of wrath.
- Judgment according to truth/works/heart — Future rendering according to deeds; secrets/heart judged by Christ (gospel); no respect of persons (outward irrelevant).
- Law increases responsibility — Without law → perish without law; with law → judged by law; hearers not justified, doers justified (none truly do).
- Gentiles accountable — By nature do law's things → law unto themselves; conscience/thoughts accuse/excuse (innate knowledge).
- Jew's hypocrisy — Boast in law/position but break it → blaspheme God's name; circumcision worthless without obedience.
- True Jew & circumcision — Inward (heart/spirit); praise of God (not men); outward form useless without inward reality.

Romans 2 exposes human hypocrisy: man judges others while guilty; despises God's present goodness/grace (longsuffering → repentance); treasures wrath for future day of judgment; no escape/respect of persons — judged by heart/works/faithfulness; law heightens responsibility but none keep it; true Jew/circumcision = inward (heart/spirit) — setting stage for justification by faith (Christ's righteousness).

Romans 3 Page - 53

Romans 3 continues with the contrast: man's unrighteousness (ch. 1–2) versus God's righteousness. Paul answers objections about Israel's role and God's faithfulness.

Verses 1–2 — What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? (v. 1)

- Twice the same question (advantage = profit; Jew = circumcision).
- Answer: Much every way — chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God (v. 2).
- Oracles = God's spoken words (Old Testament promises).
- Israel's advantage = custodians of God's Word (promises of Messiah, kingdom, New Covenant, etc.).
- All flows from this one thing: God spoke exclusively to Israel; even words to Gentiles (Nebuchadnezzar/Cyrus) were committed to Israel.

Verse 3 — What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

- "Some" = understatement; officially the people (Sanhedrin/government) rejected Christ/gospel.
- Unbelief of Israel does not nullify God's faithfulness (faith of God = His faithfulness to His Word/promises).
- God remains true to His promises — even if Israel failed as custodian.

Verse 4 — God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar — as written (Ps 51:4): That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

- God is true/faithful to His Word — man (every man) is liar/unfaithful.
- Ps 51:4 (words of Christ) — He confesses humanity's sin so God is justified (righteous) in judging/acquitting.

- Christ bore sin-debt (Head/Representative of humanity); God acquits righteously (debt paid).

Verses 5–8 — If our unrighteousness commends God's righteousness, is God unrighteous to take vengeance? (v. 5)

- Human logic: if our lie glorifies God's truth, why judged as sinners? (v. 7)
- Slander: "Let us do evil that good may come" — whose damnation is just (v. 8).
- Grace not license to sin; God's righteousness not abused to excuse evil.

Verses 9–20 — All under sin (v. 9) — Jews and Gentiles alike.

- None righteous, none understands, none seeks God (v. 10; Ps 14:1–3; 53:1–3).
- All gone out of way, unprofitable, none does good (v. 12).
- Throat open sepulchre, tongues deceit, lips poison of asps, mouth cursing/bitterness (vv. 13–14; Ps 5:9; 140:3).
- Feet swift to shed blood, destruction/misery in ways, way of peace unknown, no fear of God (vv. 15–18; Isa 59:7–8; Ps 36:1).
- Law speaks to those under law — every mouth stopped, all world guilty before God (v. 19).
- By deeds of law no flesh justified — law gives knowledge of sin (v. 20).

Verses 21–26 — But now — righteousness of God without law manifested, witnessed by law/prophets (v. 21).

- Righteousness by faith of Jesus Christ unto all/upon all who believe — no difference (v. 22).
- All sinned, come short of God's glory (v. 23).
- Justified freely by His grace through redemption in Christ Jesus (v. 24).
- God set Him forth as propitiation (mercy seat) through faith in His blood — declares righteousness for remission of past sins through forbearance (v. 25).
- Declares righteousness at this time — just (righteous) and justifier of him who believes in Jesus (v. 26).

Verses 27–31 — Where is boasting? Excluded — not by law of works, but by law of faith (v. 27).

- Man justified by faith without deeds of law (v. 28).
- God of Jews and Gentiles — one God justifies circumcision by faith, uncircumcision through faith (vv. 29–30).
- Faith does not make void law — establishes it (v. 31) — law provides for kinsman-redeemer (Goel) paying family debt (righteous ground for justification).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 3

- Israel's advantage — Oracles of God committed to them (custodians of promises) — despite unbelief, God remains faithful.
- God true, man liar — Unbelief does not nullify God's faithfulness (Ps 51:4); Christ confesses sin so God justified in acquitting.
- No boasting — Grace through Christ's redemption; justified freely by faith in His blood — righteousness declared (past/present sins forgiven righteously).
- All under sin — None righteous; law stops every mouth, makes world guilty — knowledge of sin (not justification).
- Righteousness apart from law — Manifested now (post-resurrection); by faith of Jesus Christ (His faithfulness/source) unto/upon believers — no difference (Jew/Gentile).

- Faith establishes law — Law provides righteous ground (Goel pays debt); justification by faith fulfills law's intent.

Romans 3 is pivotal: Israel's advantage = oracles of God (promises fulfilled in Christ's resurrection); God faithful despite unbelief (Christ bore debt → righteous acquittal); all under sin (law exposes, stops mouths); righteousness of God now manifested apart from law — by faith of Christ (His faithfulness) unto believers; no boasting, faith establishes law — setting stage for justification by faith alone.

Romans 4 Page - 68

Romans 4 continues directly from 3:21–31 (righteousness of God manifested apart from law, by faith of Jesus Christ). Paul uses Abraham as the definitive example that justification has always been by faith, not works/law — even before the law existed.

Verses 1–8 — Abraham's justification:

- What shall we say Abraham… hath found? (v. 1) — if justified by works, he has whereof to glory — but not before God (v. 2).
- Scripture: Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (v. 3; Gen 15:6).
- To him that worketh — reward is debt, not grace (v. 4).
- To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly — faith counted for righteousness (v. 5).
- David describes same blessedness: sins forgiven/covered, Lord imputes no sin (vv. 6–8; Ps 32:1–2).
- Faith (not works) = ground of righteousness; works earn debt, not grace.

Verses 9–12 — Timing of Abraham's justification:

- Blessedness upon circumcision only, or uncircumcision also? (v. 9)
- Reckoned when uncircumcised — not after circumcision (v. 10).
- Circumcision = sign/seal of righteousness of faith he had while uncircumcised (v. 11).
- Abraham = father of all who believe — uncircumcised (Gentiles) and circumcised who walk in steps of his faith (v. 12).
- Faith precedes circumcision; circumcision seals what faith already received.

Verses 13–17 — Promise to Abraham:

- Promise (heir of the world) not through law, but through righteousness of faith (v. 13).
- If through law, faith void, promise of none effect (v. 14).
- Law works wrath; where no law, no transgression (v. 15).
- Promise of faith, that it might be by grace — sure to all seed (not only of law, but of faith of Abraham, father of us all) (v. 16).
- Abraham believed God who quickeneth the dead, calleth things that be not as though they were (v. 17).
- Promise unconditional (grace/faith); law cannot nullify it.

Verses 18–22 — Abraham's faith:

- Against hope believed in hope — become father of many nations (v. 18; Gen 17:5).
- Not weak in faith; considered not his body (dead at 100) or Sarah's womb (v. 19).
- Staggered not at promise through unbelief; strong in faith, giving glory to God (v. 20).

- Fully persuaded God able to perform what promised (v. 21).
- Therefore imputed to him for righteousness (v. 22; Gen 15:6).

Verses 23–25 — Application to us:

- Not written for Abraham alone (v. 23).
- For us also, to whom it shall be imputed — if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (v. 24).
- Jesus delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification (v. 25).
- Faith in resurrection (God who quickens dead) = same principle as Abraham; righteousness imputed to believers.

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 4

- Abraham's example — Justified by faith (Gen 15:6 counted for righteousness) — not works/law (no boasting before God).
- Faith before circumcision/law — Reckoned while uncircumcised; circumcision = sign/seal of prior faith-righteousness.
- Promise by faith/grace — Heir of world through faith (not law); law works wrath/transgression — promise sure only by grace/faith.
- Abraham's faith — Believed against hope (dead body/Sarah's womb); strong, gave glory to God; fully persuaded God performs promises.
- Same for us — Faith imputed for righteousness if we believe on God who raised Jesus — resurrection central (delivered for offences, raised for justification).
- No works/debt — Faith (trust in God's work) counted for righteousness; works = debt, not grace.

Romans 4 proves justification is always by faith: Abraham (pre-law/uncircumcised) believed God (who quickens dead) — faith counted for righteousness; promise sure by grace/faith (not law); we believe same God who raised Jesus — imputed righteousness through faith in resurrection (not works/law). Abraham father of all believers (circumcised or not) who walk in his faith-steps.

Romans 5 Page - 77

Romans 5 emphasises Justified is by Faith and our Peace with God, Access into Grace, & Reign of Grace

Romans 5 flows directly from 3:21–4:25 (righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ). Paul now applies justification practically: peace, access, hope, glory in tribulation, and the reign of grace versus reign of sin/death through Adam/Christ comparison.

Verses 1–2 — Therefore (on ground of justification by faith):

- Being justified by faith (Christ's faith as source), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1).
    - Peace = reconciliation (two parties made one); mark of New Covenant (grace/peace = New Covenant characteristics).
- By whom also access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (v. 2).
    - Access = entrance/approach (driveway) into grace (New Covenant dominion).
    - We stand in grace officially (position); access = consciously enter/live from it.
    - Rejoice in future glory (sonship/inheritance/glorified body).

Verses 3–5 — Glory in tribulations:

- Not only so, but glory in tribulations — knowing tribulation works patience (endurance/passion) (v. 3).
- Patience → experience (proven character); experience → hope (v. 4).
- Hope makes not ashamed — love of God shed abroad in hearts by Holy Ghost given to us (v. 5).
    - Tribulation temporary; forms character → hope (future glory); love of God (Spirit/Christ in us) assures hope never disappoints.

Verses 6–11 — Much more saved by His life:

- When without strength (ungodly/sinners), Christ died for us (v. 6).
- Scarcely for righteous/good man one dies — but God commendeth His love — while sinners, Christ died for us (v. 8).
- Much more — now justified by His blood, saved from wrath through Him (v. 9).
- Much more — reconciled (enemies) by His death, saved by His life (v. 10).
- Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we received atonement (reconciliation) (v. 11).
    - Christ died for us (past); now saves by His risen life (present); wrath postponed (grace reigns now); future glory assured.

Verses 12–21 — Adam/Christ comparison (seven contrasts):

- Sin/death entered through one man (Adam); death passed upon all (all sinned in him) (v. 12).
- Sin in world before law; not imputed without law (v. 13).
- Death reigned from Adam to Moses — even over those not sinning like Adam's transgression; Adam figure of Him to come (v. 14).
- Contrasts (vv. 15–21):
    1. Offence of one → many dead; free gift → many everlasting life (v. 15).
    2. One offence → condemnation; free gift → justification (v. 16).
    3. One offence → death reigned; abundance of grace → reign in life by Jesus Christ (v. 17).
    4. One offence → judgment/condemnation on all; one righteousness → justification of life on all (v. 18).
    5. One man's disobedience → many sinners; one's obedience → many righteous (v. 19).
    6. Law entered → offence abounded; where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (v. 20).
    7. Sin reigned unto death; grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (v. 21).
- Grace overrules sin; reigns where eternal life received (New Covenant); Adam's sin → death; Christ's obedience → righteousness/life.

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 5

- Justification → peace/access — By faith (Christ's faithfulness/source) we have peace with God (New Covenant); access into grace (stand officially; enter consciously); rejoice in hope of glory.
- Glory in tribulation — Tribulation → patience → experience → hope (never disappoints); love of God/Spirit in hearts assures future glory.
- Much more saved by life — Christ died for sinners (past); much more justified by blood/saved from wrath/reconciled/saved by His risen life (present); joy in God through atonement.

- Adam/Christ contrast — Adam (one offence/disobedience) → sin/death reigned on all; Christ (one righteousness/obedience) → grace reigns unto eternal life/justification on many.
- Grace reigns — Law → offence/sin abounded; grace much more abounds (overrules); reigns through righteousness unto eternal life (New Covenant dominion).
- No boasting — Salvation by grace (Christ's work); faith (not works) → peace, access, hope, glory — all through risen Christ.

Romans 5 delves on justification by faith: peace with God (New Covenant); access into grace (stand/enter consciously); glory in tribulation (hope assured by Spirit/love); much more saved by Christ's risen life (not only death); grace reigns over sin/death (Adam → death; Christ → life/righteousness); seven contrasts show transfer from Adam (sin/death) to Christ (grace/eternal life).

Romans 6, Page -91

Romans 6: We are Dead to Sin, Alive to God – No Longer Slaves to Sin, Servants of Righteousness

Romans 6 continues directly from 5:20–21 (grace reigns much more than sin abounded). Paul addresses the logical abuse of grace: if grace abounds where sin increases, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Verse 1 — What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

- Direct question from 5:20 (grace abounded much more).
- Shall we remain in sin (serve sin) to exploit grace? — God forbid (v. 2).
- Grace not license; purpose of grace reign = serve God, not sin.

Verse 2 — How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

- Dead to sin = dead for sin (no longer under dominion).
- One died for all → all died (2 Cor 5:14); we died with Christ → no longer slaves to sin.

Verses 3–5 — Baptism into Christ = baptism into His death:

- Baptized into Jesus Christ = baptized into His death (v. 3).
- Buried with Him by baptism into death; raised with Him to walk in newness of life (v. 4).
- Planted together in likeness of death → also in likeness of resurrection (v. 5).
- Baptism = union/oneness (saturated/organism with Christ); not ritual/water baptism here, but reality (planted together).

Verse 6 — Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him — body of sin destroyed (rendered powerless), henceforth we should not serve sin.

- Old man (Adam-nature) crucified → body (members) no longer tool of sin.
- Destroyed = made useless for sin (still there, but no dominion).

Verse 7 — He that is dead is freed (acquitted) from sin.

Verse 8 — If dead with Christ → believe we shall (must) also live with Him (logical necessity, not future only).

Verse 9 — Christ raised → dieth no more; death no dominion over Him.

Verse 10 — Died unto sin once (once for all); lives unto God.

Verse 11 — Likewise reckon ye also yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Reckon = count/logizomai (faith-reckoning); position → dead to sin, alive to God.

Verse 12 — Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in lusts thereof.
Verse 13 — Neither yield members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; yield yourselves unto God (alive from dead), members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
Verse 14 — Sin shall not have dominion over you — ye are not under the law, but under grace.
Verse 15 — Shall we sin, because not under law but under grace? God forbid.
Verse 16 — To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey → his servants ye are (sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness).
Verse 17 — Thank God — were servants of sin, but obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered (Christ = form of doctrine).
Verse 18 — Made free from sin, became servants of righteousness.
Verse 19 — Speak after manner of men (infirmity of flesh): yielded members servants to uncleanness/iniquity unto iniquity; now yield members servants to righteousness unto holiness.
Verse 20 — When servants of sin → free from righteousness.
Verse 21 — What fruit had ye in things now ashamed? End = death.
Verse 22 — Now free from sin, servants to God → fruit unto holiness, end everlasting life.
Verse 23 — Wages of sin is death; gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Wages = pay for serving sin (death works in life).
- Gift = eternal life (received & lived); serve righteousness → fruit/holiness → live eternal life now.

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 6

- No license for sin — Grace abounds much more than sin; shall we continue/sin to exploit grace? God forbid — purpose = serve God/righteousness.
- Dead to sin, alive to God — Baptized into Christ's death → buried/raised with Him; old man crucified → body of sin powerless; reckon dead to sin, alive to God (position → practice).
- No dominion of sin — Not under law (sin reigns); under grace (grace reigns); sin shall not reign — yield members to righteousness/holiness.
- Slaves of righteousness — Formerly slaves to sin (free from righteousness); now free from sin → slaves to righteousness/God (obedience from heart to Christ = form of doctrine).
- Fruit & end — Serving sin → fruit unto shame/end death (working of death in life). Serving righteousness → fruit unto holiness/end everlasting life (live eternal life now).
- Grace reigns — Not law (works wrath/transgression); grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life (New Covenant dominion).

Romans 6 is the practical outworking of justification/grace: not license to sin (God forbid); we died with Christ → dead to sin (no dominion); alive to God → yield members to righteousness/holiness (serve God, not sin); grace reigns (stronger than sin); fruit unto holiness → live eternal life now (gift to be lived, not just possessed).

Romans 7 Page - 106
Romans 7: We are Free from the Law – Dead to the Law by the Body of Christ

Romans 7 continues directly from Romans 6:14 (not under law but under grace) and 6:15 (shall we sin because under grace?). Paul now addresses the logical question: if we died to sin and are under grace, are we also free from the law? The answer is yes — we have died to the law by the body of Christ, so we are married to Another (Him raised from the dead) to bring forth fruit unto God.

Verse 1 — Know ye not, brethren (those who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

- Self-evident truth: law rules the living; death ends law's dominion (no more rules/obligations).

Verses 2–3 — Marriage analogy (not mere illustration):

- Married woman bound by law to husband so long as he liveth; if husband dies, loosed from the law of her husband (v. 2).
- If she marries another while husband lives → adulteress; if husband dies → free to marry another, no adultery (v. 3).
- Old Covenant = marriage between Jehovah (Husband) and Israel (wife).
- Husband (Jehovah = Jesus Christ avant la lettre) died → wife (Israel) loosed from law of Husband.
- New marriage possible only after death of first Husband (Testator of Old Covenant); New Covenant = testament in force after death (Heb 9:16–17).

Verse 4 — Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ — that ye should be married to Another, even Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

- We died to law by the body of Christ (union with His death).
- Purpose: married to Another (risen Christ); fruitful marriage → fruit unto God (holiness/service).
- Not restoration of old marriage, but new (risen Christ = new identity/Surety of New Covenant).

Verse 5 — When we were in the flesh, motions of sins (by the law) worked in members to bring forth fruit unto death.

- In flesh (old man/under law) → sin activated/aroused by law → fruit = death (working of death/corruption).

Verses 7–13 — Is the law sin? God forbid!

- Law not sin — through law comes knowledge of sin (v. 7; Rom 3:20).
- Example: I had not known lust except law said "Thou shalt not covet" (v. 7).
- Sin taking occasion by commandment → wrought all manner of concupiscence (v. 8).
- Without the law sin was dead (inactive/unrevealed) (v. 8).
- I was alive without the law once — but when commandment came, sin revived, and I died (v. 9).
- Commandment ordained to life → found unto death (v. 10).
- Sin deceived me and slew me by commandment (v. 11).
- Law holy, commandment holy, just, good (v. 12) — fault not in law, but in man (sin uses law to arouse/kill).

Verses 14–25 — Conflict in believer (old vs. new man):

- Law spiritual; I carnal, sold under sin (v. 14).
- I do not what I would; do what I hate (v. 15).
- Consent unto law that it is good (v. 16).

- No more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me (vv. 17, 20).
- In me (flesh) dwelleth no good thing — to will present, but how to perform good I find not (v. 18).
- Another law in members wars against law of mind → captivity to law of sin (v. 23).
- O wretched man — who shall deliver from body of this death? (v. 24).
- I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord — mind serves law of God; flesh serves law of sin (v. 25).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 7

- Free from law — Law has dominion only while living; we died to law by Christ's body (union with His death) → loosed from law of Husband (Jehovah/Jesus died) → married to risen Christ (New Covenant).
- Law not sin — Holy/just/good; gives knowledge of sin; sin takes occasion by law → arouses/wrought concupiscence → death (law ministration of death).
- Conflict of old/new man — Carnal/sold under sin; delights in law inwardly but cannot perform good; sin dwells in me → I do evil I hate; another law wars → captivity to sin.
- Wretched man delivered — Who delivers from body of death? Thank God through Jesus Christ — mind serves God's law; flesh serves sin's law (ongoing tension).
- Purpose of law — Added because of transgressions; activates/arouses sin → demonstrates sin; shows need for deliverance (grace reigns, not law).
- Fruit unto God — Dead to law → married to risen Christ → fruitful (holiness/service); not under law (sin activated) but under grace (serve righteousness).

Romans 7 argues why believers are free from law: died to law by Christ's body (Husband died → wife loosed); law holy but arouses sin → death (ministration of death); believer's conflict = old man (carnal/sin dwells) vs. new man (delights in law but cannot perform); wretchedness delivered through Christ; grace reigns (not law) → fruitful marriage to risen Christ (serve righteousness/holiness).

Romans 8 Page - 124

It concludes a great doctrinal section (chs. 1–8) on justification by faith. It opens with the triumphant declaration that flows from all that has gone before: justification, peace with God, access into grace, death to sin/law, and transfer from Adam to Christ.

Verse 1 — There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

- Therefore now = summing up (conclusion from chs. 1–7) and present reality (not only future).
- No condemnation = no present judgment/wrath (Rom 1:18; John 3:18 — condemned already).
- World under wrath (darkness/ignorance); believers in Christ Jesus = delivered (peace with God, under grace).
- Not future eternal condemnation (already settled), but present dominion of sin/law/death — none for those in Christ.

Verse 2 — For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

- Law = instruction/principle/dominion.
- Old Covenant = law of sin and death (ministration of death; arouses sin).
- New Covenant = law of the Spirit of life (ministration of Spirit; grace reigns).

- Delivered from law of sin/death (Old Covenant dominion) → free to live under Spirit/life (New Covenant).

Verse 3 — What law could not do (weak through flesh), God did: sending His Son in likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh.

- Law unable (weak through flesh) → aroused sin → death.
- God sent Son in likeness of sinful flesh (mortal, tempted, yet sinless) — condemned sin (judged old nature) in flesh.
- Sin condemned (judged in Christ's body) → we freed from its dominion.

Verse 4 — That righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

- Righteous requirement (love God/neighbour) fulfilled in us — not by keeping law, but by walking after Spirit (grace produces what law demanded).
- Flesh (old man) → sin activated; Spirit → righteousness/fruit spontaneously.

Verses 5–8 — Contrast:

- After flesh → mind things of flesh → carnal mind = enmity against God (not subject to law, cannot be) → cannot please God (vv. 5–8).
- After Spirit → mind things of Spirit → life/peace (v. 6).

Verse 9 — Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if Spirit of God dwells in you.

- If no Spirit of Christ → none of His (v. 9).
- Spirit/Spirit of God/Spirit of Christ/Christ = same (indwelling Christ invisible = Spirit).

Verse 10 — If Christ in you, body dead because of sin (no longer serves sin), Spirit life because of righteousness (serves righteousness).

Verse 11 — If Spirit of Him who raised Jesus dwells in you, He shall quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit dwelling in you.

- Mortal bodies (not dead) quickened now (Spirit makes alive unto God/practice).
- Same Spirit who raised Christ → quickens us (life now).

Verses 12–13 — Debtors not to flesh (live after flesh → die); through Spirit mortify deeds of body → live (v. 13).

Verse 14 — As many as led by Spirit of God → sons of God (huios = placed sons/heirs).

Verses 15–17 — Received Spirit of adoption → cry Abba, Father (v. 15).

- Spirit bears witness with our spirit → children of God (v. 16).
- If children → heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ; if suffer with Him → glorified together (v. 17).
- Abba = Aramaic intimacy; Spirit of sonship (not fear/slavery) → cry Father (heir language).

Verses 18–25 — Present sufferings not worthy to compare with glory revealed in us (v. 18).

- Creation waits for manifestation of sons of God (v. 19).
- Subjected to vanity/corruption in hope → delivered into glorious liberty of children of God (vv. 20–21).
- Creation groans/travails until now (v. 22).
- We groan within ourselves → waiting for adoption (placing as sons), redemption of body (v. 23).
- Saved in hope (v. 24); hope not seen → patience (v. 25).

Verses 26–27 — Spirit helps infirmities; makes intercession with groanings unutterable (v. 26).

- Searches hearts → intercedes according to God's will (v. 27).

Verses 28–30 — All things work together for good to those who love God (serve Him), called according to His purpose (v. 28).

- Foreknew → predestinated to conformed to image of Son (firstborn among many brethren) (v. 29).
- Predestinated → called → justified → glorified (v. 30).
- Purpose = sonship (huiothesia); glorified = final placing as sons/heirs.

Verses 31–39 — If God for us, who against us? (v. 31).

- Spared not own Son → delivered Him up for us all → with Him freely give us all things (v. 32).
- Who charge God's elect? God justifies (v. 33).
- Who condemns? Christ died, risen, at right hand, makes intercession (v. 34).
- Who separate from love of Christ? Tribulation/distress/persecution/famine/nakedness/peril/sword? (v. 35).
- For Thy sake killed all day long; accounted sheep for slaughter (Ps 44:22) (v. 36).
- In all these more than conquerors through Him who loved us (v. 37).
- Persuaded: nothing (death/life/angels/principalities/powers/things present/to come/height/depth/any creature) separate from love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (vv. 38–39).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 8

- No condemnation — Present (not only future); world under wrath/darkness; believers in Christ = no judgment (peace/grace/Spirit).
- Law of Spirit vs. law of sin/death — Delivered from Old Covenant (sin/death) → free under New Covenant (Spirit/life/grace).
- Condemned sin in flesh — Law weak (flesh); God sent Son (likeness sinful flesh) → condemned sin → righteousness fulfilled in us (walk after Spirit).
- Led by Spirit → sons — Not in flesh (carnal mind = enmity/death); in Spirit (life/peace); led by Spirit = sons (huios = placed heirs).
- Groaning & hope — Present sufferings → glory revealed; creation waits for manifestation of sons → deliverance from corruption → glorious liberty.
- Spirit intercedes — Helps infirmities/groanings → according to God's will (sonship/glory).
- All things for good — To those who love/serve God (called to purpose = sonship); foreknown → predestinated → called → justified → glorified.
- Unbreakable love — Nothing separates from love of God in Christ; more than conquerors through Him who loved/gave Himself.

Your notes emphasize Romans 8 as climax: no present condemnation (delivered from wrath/sin/law/death); law of Spirit of life frees from law of sin/death; God condemned sin in flesh → righteousness fulfilled in us (walk after Spirit); led by Spirit → sons (placed heirs); present groaning → future glory/manifestation; Spirit intercedes → all things work for good (sonship); nothing separates from God's love in Christ — eternal security in New Covenant grace.

Romans 9 Page - 156

Romans 9:1–33: Delves on Paul's Grief for Israel – Not All Israel Is of Israel; Election by Faith

Romans 9 begins a new section (chs. 9–11) addressing the question raised by chapters 1–8: if salvation/justification/sonship/glory belong to believers (not by law/descent), what about Israel's promises? Paul's great heaviness and continual sorrow (vv. 1–3) shows his deep grief: Israel (his kinsmen according to the flesh) has no share in these blessings — implying they have gone to others.

Verses 1–5 — Paul's anguish & Israel's privileges:

- Truth in Christ, conscience bearing witness in Holy Ghost — no lie (v. 1).
- Great heaviness/continual sorrow in heart (v. 2).
- Could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, kinsmen according to flesh (v. 3) — willing to forfeit present work of Christ (sonship/glorification) if it saved them.
- They are Israelites — to whom belong:
    - Adoption (sonship)
    - Glory
    - Covenants
    - Giving of the law
    - Service of God (priesthood)
    - Promises
    - Fathers (patriarchs)
    - Christ according to flesh (over all, God blessed forever) (vv. 4–5).
- All privileges given to Israel — yet they have no part in blessings of chs. 1–8 (justification/peace/grace/sonship).

Verses 6–13 — Not all Israel is of Israel; election by promise/faith, not descent/works:

- Word of God not without effect (v. 6).
- Not all seed of Abraham = children; in Isaac seed called (v. 7; Gen 21:12).
- Children of flesh ≠ children of God; children of promise counted for seed (v. 8).
- Promise: at this time Sarah shall have son (v. 9; Gen 18:10).
- Rebecca conceived by one (Isaac); children not yet born, neither good nor evil — purpose of God according to election (not works, but of Him who calls) might stand (vv. 10–11).
- Elder serve younger (v. 12; Gen 25:23).
- Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated (v. 13; Mal 1:2–3) — "hate" = set aside/secondary (not emotional hatred).
- God chooses (election) on ground of promise/faith, not natural descent/works.

Verses 14–24 — Is God unrighteous? God forbid!

- No unrighteousness with God (v. 14).
- Mercy on whom He wills; hardens whom He wills (v. 18).
- Potter power over clay: one vessel unto honour, another unto dishonour (v. 21).
- God willing to show wrath/power, endured with longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (v. 22).
- Make known riches of His glory on vessels of mercy prepared unto glory (v. 23).
- Vessels of mercy = us (called, not Jews only, but Gentiles) (v. 24).

Verses 25–29 — Prophetic quotations applied to present:

- Hosea: call them my people who were not my people; beloved who was not beloved (vv. 25–26; Hos 2:23).
- In place where said "not my people" → called children of living God (v. 26).

- Isaiah: though children of Israel as sand of sea, remnant shall be saved (v. 27; Isa 10:22).
- Lord finishes/cuts short work in righteousness — short work on earth (v. 28; Isa 10:23).
- Except Lord of Sabaoth left seed → as Sodom/Gomorrah (v. 29; Isa 1:9).

Verses 30–33 — Gentiles attained righteousness by faith; Israel stumbled:

- Gentiles (followed not after righteousness) attained righteousness of faith (v. 30).
- Israel (followed after law of righteousness) attained not (v. 31).
- Sought not by faith, but as by works of law → stumbled at stumblingstone (v. 32).
- Stone laid in Zion (stumblingstone/rock of offence); believer on Him shall not be ashamed (v. 33; Isa 28:16; 8:14).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 9

- Paul's grief — Sorrow that Israel (kinsmen/flesh) has no share in blessings (justification/peace/grace/sonship) — would be accursed from Christ if it saved them.
- Privileges of Israel — Adoption, glory, covenants, law, service, promises, fathers, Christ according to flesh — yet rejected (unbelief).
- Not all Israel of Israel — Not descent/works; election by promise/faith (Isaac not Ishmael; Jacob not Esau; children of promise counted seed).
- God's sovereignty — Mercy on whom He wills; hardens whom He wills; potter power over clay (vessels of wrath/honour/mercy) — no unrighteousness with God.
- Remnant & Gentiles — Only remnant saved; Gentiles (not seeking righteousness) attained by faith; Israel (seeking by law) stumbled at Stone (Christ).
- Faith vs. works — Righteousness by faith (not law/works); stumblingstone = Christ; believer not ashamed.

Romans 9 elucidates Israel's unbelief: privileges given (oracles/promises), yet rejected (unbelief); not all Israel = believers (election by promise/faith, not descent/works); God sovereign (mercy/hardening; potter/clay); remnant saved; Gentiles attained righteousness by faith; Israel stumbled at Christ — yet God faithful to promises (fulfilled in church, especially ten tribes/Ephraim as birthright heirs).

Romans 10, Page - 176

Romans 10: Paul's Desire & Prayer for Israel's Salvation – Faith Comes by Hearing the Preached Word

Romans 10 continues Paul's anguish (from ch. 9) over Israel's unbelief and explains how Israel (and anyone) can still be saved: through hearing and believing the preached gospel. Paul's heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved (v. 1) — genuine zeal, but misplaced.

Verses 2–4 — Israel's zeal without knowledge:

- Zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (v. 2).
- Ignorant of God's righteousness (by faith); seek to establish own righteousness (by works of law); not submitted to God's righteousness (v. 3).
- Christ is the end (goal/termination) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (v. 4).

        - Law leads to Christ (fulfilled/terminated in Him); righteousness not by law-keeping but by faith in Christ.

Verses 5–13 — Righteousness of law vs. righteousness of faith:

- Law (Moses): "Do these things and live" (Lev 18:5) — impossible (no one does perfectly) (v. 5).
- Faith (Deut 30:12–14): Do not say "Who shall ascend into heaven?" (bring Christ down) or "Who shall descend into the deep?" (bring Christ up from dead) (vv. 6–7).
    - Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and heart — the word of faith we preach (v. 8).
- Salvation simple: confess with mouth Jesus is Lord; believe in heart God raised Him from dead → saved (v. 9).
    - Heart belief → righteousness; mouth confession → salvation (v. 10).
- Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed (v. 11; Isa 28:16).
- No difference between Jew/Greek: same Lord rich unto all who call on Him (v. 12).
- Whosoever calls on name of Lord shall be saved (v. 13; Joel 2:32).

Verses 14–17 — Necessity of preaching:

- How call on Him not believed? How believe without hearing? How hear without preacher? (v. 14).
- Preachers must be sent (v. 15; Isa 52:7; Nahum 1:15): "How beautiful are feet of them that preach gospel of peace/bring glad tidings!"
- Not all obeyed gospel: "Lord, who hath believed our report?" (v. 16; Isa 53:1).
- Faith comes by hearing, hearing by word of God (v. 17).
    - Salvation only by hearing preached word → believing → calling on Lord.

Verse 18 — Israel has heard: "Their sound went into all the earth, their words unto ends of world" (Ps 19:4).

- Gospel preached throughout whole world (creation testifies; gospel reached all nations).

Verse 19 — Israel provoked to jealousy by "no people"/"foolish nation" (Deut 32:21) — Gentiles/Lo-Ammi (ten tribes/church).

Verse 20 — Isaiah bold: "I was found of them that sought me not; made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (Isa 65:1) — Gentiles/Lo-Ammi.

Verse 21 — To Israel: "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Isa 65:2) — resisted/contradicted God's word.

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 10

- Paul's prayer — Heart's desire/prayer for Israel's salvation (v. 1); prays God send preachers (faith by hearing preached word).
- Zeal without knowledge — Israel zealous for God but ignorant of His righteousness (by faith); seek own righteousness (law/works) → not submitted to God's way (Christ end of law).
- Righteousness by faith — Not by law (do & live — impossible); word nigh (in mouth/heart); confess Jesus Lord, believe God raised Him → saved (heart → righteousness; mouth → salvation).
- No difference — Jew/Greek same; same Lord rich to all who call on Him; whosoever believes/calls → saved.

- Faith by hearing — Preaching essential (sent preachers); faith comes by hearing word of God; not all obeyed (remnant believed).
- Israel heard/provoked — Gospel preached worldwide; Israel provoked to jealousy by "no people"/Gentiles; stretched hands to disobedient/gainsaying people.

Romans 10 explain Israel's unbelief & their path to salvation: zeal without knowledge (law/works); righteousness by faith (Christ end of law); salvation simple (believe/confess risen Jesus); faith by hearing preached word; Israel heard but rejected (provoked by Gentiles/Lo-Ammi); God still stretches hands to disobedient people — salvation for whosoever believes. Preaching essential; Paul prays/sends preachers.

Romans 11 Page -194

Romans 11 resolves the tension from chapters 9–10: if Israel (Jewish people) has largely rejected the gospel and blessings have gone to Gentiles (the church), has God permanently cast away His people? Paul emphatically answers no — God remains faithful to His irrevocable promises, though in a temporary, dispensational way. A remnant exists now by grace; Israel is partially hardened until the fulness of the Gentiles (church) comes in; Gentiles are grafted in to provoke Israel to jealousy; and "all Israel" will yet be saved in the future.

Verses 1–6 — God has not cast away His people:

- Hath God cast away His people? God forbid (v. 1).
- Proof: Paul himself is an Israelite (seed of Abraham, tribe of Benjamin) (v. 1).
- God has not rejected Israel whom He foreknew (v. 2).
- Elijah thought he alone remained (v. 3); God reserved 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal (v. 4; 1 Kgs 19:18).
- Even so now — at this present time — there is a remnant according to the election of grace (v. 5).
- If by grace → no more of works (otherwise grace is no more grace) (v. 6).

Verses 7–10 — Election obtained it; the rest hardened:

- Israel sought but did not obtain; election (believers/remnant) obtained it; the rest were blinded (v. 7).
- God gave them spirit of slumber, eyes not to see, ears not to hear (v. 8; Isa 29:10).
- David's curse (Ps 69:22–23): their table → snare/trap/stumblingblock/recompense; eyes darkened, back bowed continually (vv. 9–10).

Verses 11–15 — Fall → riches to Gentiles; future fulness → greater blessing:

- Did they stumble to fall permanently? God forbid — through their fall salvation to Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy (v. 11).
- Their fall = riches of world; diminishing = riches of Gentiles; how much more their fulness! (v. 12).
- Paul (apostle to Gentiles) magnifies ministry → provoke his flesh (kinsmen) to jealousy, save some (vv. 13–14).
- Casting away = reconciling world; receiving = life from the dead (national resurrection/rebirth) (v. 15).

Verses 16–24 — Olive tree illustration:

- Firstfruit holy → lump holy; root holy → branches holy (v. 16).

- Some natural branches (unbelieving Jews) broken off for unbelief; wild olive (Gentiles) grafted in contrary to nature, partaking of root/fatness (v. 17).
- Do not boast against branches — you do not support root; root supports you (v. 18).
- Broken off for unbelief; you stand by faith — be not highminded, but fear (v. 20).
- God spared not natural branches → take heed lest He spare not you (v. 21).
- Behold God's goodness (to you) & severity (to them that fell); continue in goodness, or cut off (v. 22).
- Natural branches can be grafted back if cease unbelief — God able (v. 23).
- If wild grafted contrary to nature into good olive → how much more natural into own olive tree (v. 24).

Verses 25–32 — The mystery revealed:

- Lest wise in own conceits: blindness in part to Israel until fulness of Gentiles come in (v. 25).
- All Israel shall be saved — Deliverer from Sion turns ungodliness from Jacob (v. 26; Isa 59:20).
- Covenant: "When I take away their sins" (v. 27).
- Gospel → enemies for your sakes; election → beloved for fathers' sakes (v. 28).
- Gifts/calling of God without repentance (irrevocable) (v. 29).
- You once disobeyed → obtained mercy through their unbelief; now they disobeyed → through your mercy obtain mercy (vv. 30–31).
- God concluded all in unbelief → mercy upon all (v. 32).

Verses 33–36 — Doxology:

- O depth of riches of wisdom/knowledge of God! Unsearchable judgments, ways past finding out (v. 33).
- Who knew mind of Lord? Who His counsellor? Who first gave to Him? (vv. 34–35).
- Of Him, through Him, to Him are all things — to Him be glory forever (v. 36).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 11

- God faithful — Has not cast away Israel (remnant now by grace; irrevocable gifts/calling); partial blindness temporary.
- Gentile role — Grafted in (wild olive) to partake of root/fatness; provoke Israel to jealousy; mercy through their unbelief.
- Israel's future — Fulness (national conversion/restoration) → greater blessing ("life from dead"); all Israel saved when Deliverer comes (after fulness of Gentiles/church).
- Olive tree — One tree (Israel's privileges); natural branches broken off (unbelief); wild grafted in (contrary to nature); natural can be grafted back (if cease unbelief).
- Mystery — Blindness in part until fulness of Gentiles; all Israel saved; God's mercy on all (Jews/Gentiles) through mutual unbelief/mercy.
- Doxology — God's wisdom/knowledge unsearchable; no one His counsellor; all things of/through/to Him → glory forever.

Romans 11 ensures God faithfulness to Israel (remnant now by grace; irrevocable promises); Gentiles (wild olive/church) grafted in to provoke jealousy & fulfill plan; partial hardening until church's fulness (rapture); future national conversion/restoration of Israel ("all Israel saved"); olive tree shows temporary transfer (unbelief → grafting; future regrafting); all to God's glory — unsearchable wisdom/plan.

Romans 12 Page - 222

Romans 12 marks the practical turning point of the epistle (chs. 12–16), shifting from doctrine (position/standing in chs. 1–11) to walk/state (how justified believers live). Paul appeals directly to regenerate believers ("brethren") on the ground of God's mercies (justification, peace, grace, sonship, New Covenant priesthood).

Verse 1 — I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God — present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

- Therefore = on ground of mercies (chs. 1–11: justification by faith, resurrection life, deliverance from law/sin/death, New Covenant).
- Beseech = God (through Paul) asks regenerate believers: are you willing? (appeal, not command).
- Present bodies = place at God's disposal (priestly self-offering to High Priest Christ).
- Living sacrifice = body alive unto God (Spirit quickens mortal bodies — Rom 8:11); holy (set apart for service); acceptable (to God, not self/others).
- Reasonable service = logical/logikos worship (of the logos/Word); born of God → logical to serve Him (priests by birth under New Covenant, not Aaronic).
- Priesthood: born priests (New Covenant); offer self (not animals); available for service (fill hands at throne of grace); receive mercy/help; everything we do = priestly work (daily life unto Lord, not men — Col 3:23).

Verse 2 — Be not conformed to this world (age); be ye transformed by renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good, acceptable, perfect will of God.

- Conformity = thinking as world (external pressure); transformation = inward change (renewed mind by Word).
- Goal: prove/experience God's will (good/acceptable/perfect) in practice (not theory).
- Change begins after presenting bodies (v. 1); mind renewed by taking in Word (spiritual food); prove will by living it (experience confirms).

Verse 3 — Through grace given (Paul's apostolic ministry), to every man: not think of himself more highly than he ought, but think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

- Grace = gift/responsibility/course set by God (not just forgiveness).
- Sober thinking = within God-given measure (not overreach); measure = portion of faith/faithfulness (what one can bear).
- God deals out responsibility (talents = administration) according to ability; different functions in body (no uniformity).

Verses 4–8 — One body, many members, different offices/gifts:

- Many members, one body in Christ; members one of another (v. 5).
- Gifts differ according to grace given (v. 6).
- Examples (use according to measure):
    - Prophecy → according to proportion of faith.
    - Ministry → in ministering.
    - Teaching → in teaching.
    - Exhortation → in exhortation.
    - Giving → with simplicity.
    - Ruling → with diligence.
    - Showing mercy → with cheerfulness (vv. 6–8).

- No fixed list; by way of example; faithfulness in own measure (not covet others' gifts).

Verses 9–21 — Characteristics of Christian life (love without dissimulation):

- Love without dissimulation (unfeigned/real) — abhor evil, cleave to good (v. 9).
- Kindly affectioned with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another (v. 10).
- Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord (v. 11).
- Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer (v. 12).
- Distributing to necessity of saints; given to hospitality (v. 13).
- Bless persecutors (bless, curse not) (v. 14).
- Rejoice with rejoicers; weep with weepers (v. 15).
- Same mind one toward another; mind not high things; condescend to low estate; not wise in own conceits (v. 16).
- Recompense no evil for evil; provide honest in sight of all (v. 17).
- If possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all (v. 18).
- Avenge not yourselves; give place unto wrath (Vengeance is Mine, I will repay — Lord) (v. 19).
- If enemy hungers, feed; thirsts, give drink — heap coals of fire on head (v. 20).
- Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (v. 21).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 12

- Mercies of God → practical walk — On ground of justification/peace/grace (chs. 1–11), present bodies living sacrifice (priestly self-offering to Christ); reasonable/logical service (born priests under New Covenant).
- Renewed mind — Not conformed to world (thinking as age); transformed by Word → prove/experience God's good/acceptable/perfect will in practice.
- One body, diverse gifts — Many members, one body in Christ; gifts differ (grace-given measure); use faithfully (prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, mercy).
- Love without dissimulation — Unfeigned/real love = serve one another; kindly affectioned (brotherly); prefer in honour; fervent in spirit; serving Lord.
- Practical ethics — Rejoice in hope, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer; distribute to saints, hospitality; bless persecutors; sympathize (rejoice/weep); same mind (devotion to Christ); no highmindedness; recompense no evil; overcome evil with good.
- Self-denial & future hope — Not avenge (Lord repays); give place to wrath; heap coals (kindness shames); overcome evil with good (break cycle).

Romans 12 is the practical outworking of justification: present bodies living sacrifice (priestly self-offering to Christ); renewed mind by Word (prove God's will); one body, diverse gifts (use faithfully in measure); love unfeigned (serve one another); practical life: hope/patience/prayer, hospitality, bless enemies, overcome evil with good — all unto Lord, not self/world.

Romans 13, Page - 245

Romans 13: Submission to Governing Authorities – Love as the Fulfilling of the Law

Romans 13 continues the practical outworking of justification by faith (chs. 12–16), addressing our position in this present evil world. Believers have a heavenly citizenship (seated with Christ, under grace/Spirit), yet remain subject to earthly authorities as

God's ordained institution — not anarchists, but good citizens who serve God in subjection

Verses 1–7 — Submission to higher powers:

- Let every soul be subject unto higher powers (v. 1) — every individual (soul = outward walk/person).
- No power but of God; powers that be ordained of God (v. 1).
- Resist power = resist ordinance of God → receive damnation (v. 2).
- Rulers terror to evil, praise to good (v. 3).
- Ruler = minister of God for good; bears sword (punishment) not in vain; revenger to execute wrath on evil (v. 4).
- Be subject not only for wrath, but for conscience sake (v. 5).
- Pay tribute/custom (v. 6) — rulers attend continually to this.
- Render dues: tribute, custom, fear, honour (v. 7).
- Government = divine institution (Gen 9:6); ministers of God (feminine toward God, masculine toward people); subjection = position (not always blind obedience — obey God rather than men when conflict).

Verses 8–10 — Owe no man anything but to love one another (v. 8).

- He that loves another fulfilled the law (v. 8).
- Commandments (adultery, murder, theft, false witness, covet) summed up in: love thy neighbour as thyself (v. 9; Lev 19:18).
- Love works no ill to neighbour → love is fulfilling of the law (v. 10).
- Love = bond of perfectness (unity/fellowship); fruit of Spirit (not law); spontaneous under grace (not commanded under law).

Verses 11–14 — Knowing the time — high time to awake:

- Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed (v. 11).
- Night far spent, day at hand (New Covenant dawn) → cast off works of darkness, put on armour of light (v. 12).
- Walk honestly as in day — not rioting/drunkenness, chambering/wantonness, strife/envying (v. 13).
- Put on the Lord Jesus Christ; make no provision for flesh to fulfil lusts (v. 14).
- Cast off old man (darkness); put on new man (Christ/light) — walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4); redeem time (evil days).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 13

- Heavenly vs. earthly position — Believers heavenly citizens (seated in Christ), yet subject to earthly authorities (ordained of God) — not withdrawn from world, but good citizens (subjection for conscience/good).
- Government as God's minister — Instituted by God (Gen 9); no power but of God; ministers for good (punish evil, praise good); bears sword (justice/wrath); subjection not blind obedience (obey God rather than men when conflict).
- Love fulfills law — Owe nothing but love (v. 8); love no ill to neighbour → fulfills law (v. 10); spontaneous fruit of grace/Spirit (not law command); love = fellowship/unity/service.
- Wake up — day at hand — Know time (New Covenant dawn); night (Old Covenant/law) far spent; cast off darkness/works of flesh; put on armour of light/Christ; redeem time (evil days); walk honestly in day.
- No provision for flesh — Put on Lord Jesus Christ (new man); no care for flesh/lusts — serve righteousness (not sin/law).

Romans 13 touches our practical position in the world: believers heavenly (seated in Christ, under grace/Spirit), yet subject to earthly authorities (God's ordained institution/minister) — subjection for conscience (not blind obedience); love fulfills law (spontaneous fruit of grace, not command); wake up — day (New Covenant) at hand; cast off darkness, put on Christ; redeem time; no provision for flesh — serve righteousness/love (fellowship with brethren).

Romans 14, Page - 256

Romans 14 addresses practical unity amid differences in conviction among believers — especially on food (meat vs. herbs) and days (special vs. all alike). The chapter calls for mutual acceptance, personal conviction before the Lord, and living unto Him rather than judging or despising one another

Verse 1 — Him that is weak in the faith receive ye (proslambano = take/draw to oneself), but not to doubtful disputations (not for judgment/debate on opinions).

- Strong in faith must actively draw/receive weak (not merely tolerate or debate).
- Weak = limited/immature faith (scruples/conscience-bound on disputable matters); strong expected to bear infirmities (Rom 15:1).
- Reception = compassionate inclusion (energy/compassion), not rejection or correction for opinions.

Verse 2 — One believes he may eat all things; weak (herb-eater) eats only herbs/vegetables.

- Food example: weak avoid meat (possibly idol-sacrificed/unclean by conscience); strong eat all with thanksgiving (1 Tim 4:4–5).
- Not health/vegetarianism per se, but conscience/conviction (weak fear defilement; strong know nothing unclean of itself if received with thanks).

Verse 3 — Let not him that eats despise weak who eats not; let not weak judge strong who eats — God hath received him.

- Strong not despise weak (look down on scruples).
- Weak not judge strong (condemn liberty).
- God accepts both — mutual acceptance flows from God's acceptance.

Verse 4 — Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls — God able to make him stand.

- No judging another's servant — each answers to own Master (Lord).
- Weak shall be upheld — God strengthens in time (not our job to force maturity).

Verse 5 — One esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike — let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

- Days example: weak esteem special days (Sabbath/Sunday/feasts); strong see all days unto Lord (every day holy/rest).
- Personal conviction (fully persuaded) — not imposed; each stands before own Master.

Verse 6 — He that regards day regards it unto Lord; he that eats gives thanks to God — whether eats or not, does unto Lord and gives thanks.

- Motive = unto Lord (not self/others); thanksgiving marks all (received with thanks = sanctified — 1 Tim 4:4–5).

Verses 7–9 — None lives/dies to himself — we live/die unto Lord (vv. 7–8).

- Christ died/rose/revived to be Lord of dead and living (v. 9).
- All belong to Him — life/death unto Lord (service/accountability to Him alone).

Verses 10–12 — Why judge/set at nought brother? All stand before judgment seat of Christ (v. 10).

- Every one gives account of himself to God (v. 12) — personal, not collective; no judging others (Lord judges).

Verse 13 — Judge no more; rather judge this — no stumblingblock/occasion to fall for brother.

- Shift focus: not judge others, but avoid offending weak (build up, not tear down).

Verse 14 — Know/persuaded in Lord Jesus: nothing unclean of itself; to him that esteems unclean, to him it is unclean.

- Nothing inherently unclean (all good if received with thanks).
- Personal conscience: if weak reckons unclean → unclean for him (violating conscience = sin).

Verse 23 — He that doubts is damned if he eats (not of faith); whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- Doubt = double-minded (waver between conviction/fear).
- Acting against conscience = sin (not faith); faith = full persuasion before Lord.

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 14

- Receive/draw the weak — Strong actively welcome weak in faith (draw/compassion, not tolerate/judge); bear infirmities (Rom 15:1); God receives both.
- Personal conviction before Lord — Differences (food/days) = conscience/conviction; be fully persuaded in own mind; do all unto Lord with thanksgiving.
- No judging/despising — Strong not despise weak (liberty); weak not judge strong (scruples); each servant to own Master (Lord judges).
- Unto the Lord — Live/die unto Lord (not self); Christ Lord of dead/living; all give account to Him (judgment seat of Christ).
- Avoid stumbling — Do not give offence/occasion to fall; build up brother (edification over rights).
- Conscience & faith — Nothing unclean of itself; unclean if reckoned so (violating conscience = sin); whatsoever not of faith = sin.

Romans 14 touches practical unity in diversity: strong draw/receive weak (not judge/despise); differences (food/days) = conscience/conviction; all unto Lord with thanksgiving; no judging (each to own Master); avoid stumbling; conscience sacred (what not of faith = sin); live/die unto Lord — personal accountability before judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 15, Page - 268

Encourages us to Bear the Weak – Christ as Example; Paul's Ministry & Plans

Romans 15 continues the practical exhortations (from ch. 12 onward) on unity, love, and edification in the body of Christ. It urges the strong to bear the weak, presents Christ as the ultimate example of self-denial, summarizes Paul's ministry to Gentiles, and shares his travel plans while requesting prayer.

Verses 1–3 — Strong bear the weak:

- We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves (v. 1).

        - Strong = mature in faith; weak = limited/immature in faith (scruples/conscience).
        - Bear = support/endure (not despise/judge); not self-pleasing (self-centred).
- Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification (v. 2).
    - Edification = building up (church as living stones/temple).
- Even Christ pleased not himself — reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me (v. 3; Ps 69:9).
    - Christ's example: self-denial/devotion (bore reproach for God's house); present work in church (cleansing/sanctifying) also at cost of His honour.

Verse 4 — Scriptures written for our learning:

- Old Testament examples (Christ's self-denial) for our learning — through patience (endurance) and comfort/consolation of scriptures → hope (v. 4).
- Scriptures = patience/comfort → hope (future glory/sonship/inheritance).

Verses 5–6 — Prayer for likemindedness:

- God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus (v. 5).
    - Likemindedness = unity/devotion to Christ (not forced consensus).
- With one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 6).
    - Unity in glorifying God (one purpose/mouth) — fruit of patience/comfort/hope.

Verse 7 — Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

- Mutual reception (strong/weak) mirrors Christ's reception of us — for God's glory (not self).

Verses 8–12 — Christ's ministry confirms promises & includes Gentiles:

- Christ became minister of the circumcision for truth of God, to confirm promises made to fathers (v. 8).
    - Fulfilled/terminated law; promises (New Covenant/sonship/glory) to Abraham's seed (Christ).
- Gentiles glorify God for His mercy (vv. 9–12; Ps 18:49; Deut 32:43; Ps 117:1; Isa 11:10).
    - Gentiles praise God (among Gentiles/sing unto Thy name/rejoice with His people/seek Him).
    - Root of Jesse rises to reign over Gentiles; Gentiles trust in Him.

Verses 13 — God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through power of Holy Ghost.

- Joy/peace in believing → abound in hope (future glory/sonship) — by Spirit's power.

Verses 14–16 — Paul's persuasion & ministry:

- Persuaded of Romans: full of goodness/knowledge, able to admonish one another (v. 14).
- Written boldly to remind (by grace given him) — minister of Jesus Christ to Gentiles (v. 16).
    - Ministering gospel of God; offering up of Gentiles acceptable, sanctified by Holy Ghost.

Verses 17–21 — Paul's glory & pioneering ministry:

- Glory through Christ in things pertaining to God (v. 17).
- Speaks only what Christ wrought by him — making Gentiles obedient by word/deed (v. 18).
- Mighty signs/wonders/power of Spirit — fully preached gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum (v. 19).
- Strived to preach where Christ not named — not build on another's foundation (v. 20).
- As written: "To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see; they that have not heard shall understand" (v. 21; Isa 52:15).

Verses 22–29 — Paul's plans & request for prayer:

- Hindered from coming (no place in these parts; desire many years) (vv. 22–23).
- Now going to Jerusalem to minister unto saints (collection) (v. 25).
- Macedonia/Achaia pleased to make contribution for poor saints in Jerusalem (v. 26).
- Gentiles partakers of spiritual things → duty to minister carnal things (v. 27).
- After sealing this fruit → come by Rome to Spain (vv. 24, 28).
- Sure to come in fulness of blessing of gospel of Christ (v. 29).

Verses 30–33 — Prayer request & benediction:

- Beseech for Christ's sake/love of Spirit — strive together in prayers (v. 30).
- Delivered from unbelievers in Judaea; service for Jerusalem accepted (v. 31).
- Come with joy by God's will; refreshed with them (v. 32).
- God of peace be with you all (v. 33).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 15

- Strong bear weak — Bear infirmities (not please self); please neighbour for good/edification (build up church); Christ's example (pleased not Himself; bore reproaches).
- Scriptures for learning/hope — Written for our admonition; patience/comfort → hope (future glory/sonship).
- Likemindedness/glorification — God of patience/consolation grant likemindedness according to Christ; one mind/mouth glorify God (unity/devotion).
- Receive one another — As Christ received us to God's glory (mutual acceptance).
- Christ's ministry — Minister of circumcision to confirm promises; Gentiles glorify God for mercy (prophecies fulfilled in church).
- Paul's Gentile ministry — Minister to Gentiles; offering acceptable/sanctified by Spirit; glory in Christ's work (not own); pioneered where Christ not named.
- Plans & prayer — Collection for Jerusalem (Gentiles minister carnal for spiritual); travel to Spain via Rome; prayer for deliverance/acceptance/joy.

Romans 15 pictures the true outworking of unity/love: strong bear weak (edification, not self-pleasing); Christ's self-denial example (bore reproaches); Scriptures for patience/comfort/hope; likeminded glorification of God; Paul's Gentile ministry (confirm promises; offering sanctified); plans (Jerusalem collection → Rome → Spain); prayer for deliverance/refreshing — God of peace with all.

Romans 16 Page - 287

Paul sends greetings to 32 individuals (and households/churches), commends Phebe (the probable letter carrier), warns against division-makers, and ends with a doxology praising God's wisdom in revealing the mystery. The chapter reveals Paul's extensive network in Rome (despite never visiting), underscores the church's Gentile character (especially linked to the British royal house in exile), and emphasizes faithfulness to doctrine amid practical fellowship.

Verses 1–2 — Commendation of Phebe:

- Phebe our sister, servant (diakonos) of church at Cenchrea (v. 1).
- Receive her in Lord as becometh saints; assist her in business — she has been succourer (prostatis = patron/leader/helper) of many, including Paul (v. 2).
- Phebe likely delivered letter from Corinth/Cenchrea; her ministry = support/leadership in service.

Verses 3–16 — Extensive greetings (32 named individuals/households):

- Priscilla & Aquila (helpers; risked lives; churches of Gentiles thank them) — church in their house (vv. 3–5).
- Epaenetus (firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ) (v. 5).
- Mary (bestowed much labour) (v. 6).
- Andronicus & Junia (kinsmen, fellow prisoners, of note among apostles, in Christ before Paul) (v. 7).
- Amplias (beloved in Lord) (v. 8).
- Urbane (helper in Christ), Stachys (beloved) (v. 9).
- Apelles (approved in Christ); household of Aristobulus (v. 10).
- Herodion (kinsman); household of Narcissus in Lord (v. 11).
- Tryphena & Tryphosa (labour in Lord); Persis (laboured much in Lord) (v. 12).
- Rufus (chosen in Lord), his mother (and mine) (v. 13).
- Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, brethren with them (v. 14).
- Philologus, Julia, Nereus & sister, Olympas, all saints with them (v. 15).
- Salute one another with holy kiss; churches of Christ salute you (v. 16).
- Many names unknown biblically; historical links (e.g., Aristobulus = brother of Barnabas; Rufus/Pudens = British royal connections; Priscilla = mother of Rufus/Paul?). Church in Rome likely centered in Palatium Britannicum (British palace in exile); Gentile character strong.

Verses 17–20 — Warning against division-makers:

- Mark/avoid those causing divisions/offences contrary to doctrine learned (v. 17).
- Serve not Lord Christ but own belly; deceive simple by good words/fair speeches (v. 18).
- Obedience come abroad; glad on behalf — wise unto good, simple concerning evil (v. 19).
- God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly; grace of Lord Jesus Christ with you (v. 20).
- Warning: faithfulness to doctrine essential; division-makers serve self (not Christ); simplicity re evil (not naive but untainted); victory over Satan through God of peace.

Verses 21–23 — Greetings from Paul's companions:

- Timotheus (workfellow), Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (kinsmen) (v. 21).
- Tertius (wrote epistle) salutes in Lord (v. 22).

- Gaius (host & of whole church), Erastus (chamberlain of city), Quartus (brother) (v. 23).
- Written from Corinth; companions (some kinsmen) with Paul.

Verse 24 — Grace of Lord Jesus Christ with you all. Amen. (Repeated close).
Verses 25–27 — Final doxology (mystery revealed):

- To Him able to stablish according to my gospel & preaching of Jesus Christ, according to revelation of mystery kept secret since world began (v. 25).
- Now made manifest by prophetic scriptures, commandment of everlasting God, made known to all nations for obedience of faith (v. 26).
- To God only wise, glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen (v. 27).
- Mystery = hidden since world began, now revealed (post-resurrection); gospel preaching = obedience of faith among nations (Gentiles/church).

Key Overarching Themes in Romans 16

- Personal network & Gentile character — Paul knows 32+ in Rome (never visited); greetings show deep ties (Aquila/Priscilla, Aristobulus, Rufus/Pudens/Claudia/Linus = British royal links in Palatium Britannicum); church primarily Gentile (ten tribes/Ephraim birthright fulfillment).
- Receive & warn — Draw weak in faith; avoid division-makers (contrary to doctrine); serve Christ (not self); simple concerning evil; God bruises Satan shortly.
- Mystery revealed — Hidden since world began, now manifest (post-resurrection); gospel preaching to nations for obedience of faith; glory to wise God through Christ forever.
- Practical fellowship — Holy kiss; mutual greetings (churches of Christ); all unto Lord (not self/other believers).
- Faithfulness to doctrine — Mark/avoid contrary to learned doctrine; obedience abroad (known for faithfulness); wise unto good.

Romans 16 closes affectionately with extensive greetings to reveal Paul's Gentile network (British royal house in Rome); receive weak (draw/bear); warn against division (contrary to doctrine); mystery revealed (post-resurrection gospel to nations); glory to God through Christ forever — faithfulness to doctrine essential amid practical unity.

Introduction to Romans 1

The Book of Romans is frequently cited as the most systematic, logical, and argumentative book in the New Testament

Written by the Apostle Paul, it is often described as a structured masterpiece that lays out a legal and theological case for Christianity—defining the human problem, God's solution, and the practical result

Paul organizes his arguments to build a cumulative case for the gospel:

- The Universal Need for Salvation (1:18–3:20): Paul argues that all humanity, both Gentiles (1:18–32) and Jews (2:1–3:20), are under sin and lack God's righteousness, rendering them in need of redemption.
- Justification by Faith (3:21–5:21): He presents the core doctrine that righteousness is credited through faith in Jesus Christ, rather than by works of the law, using Abraham as an example (chapter 4).

- Sanctification and Life in the Spirit (6–8): Paul argues that grace does not lead to lawlessness but to a new life in Christ, where believers are freed from the power of sin and empowered by the Holy Spirit (8:1).
- God's Plan for Israel (9–11): He addresses the place of Israel in God's redemptive plan, discussing sovereignty, election, and the inclusion of the Gentiles.
- Practical Application (12–16): The letter culminates in instructions on how to live out this faith, including ethical behaviour, unity within the church, and submission to authorities

Paul weaves dozens of Old Testament quotations and allusions into a single coherent argument (more OT quotations appear in Romans than in any other New Testament book except perhaps Revelation). He shows how the gospel is the fulfilment—not the abolition—of the law and the prophets, which gives the letter tremendous intellectual and explaining what a biblical text means primarily in its original historical and literary context..

The Book is a letter, and that is something special. In the New Testament we have 27 books of the Bible, of which 21 are called “the epistle to…”.

Only 6 of the 27 New Testament books are therefore not letters.

Although… it is not so difficult to show afterwards that the remaining books also have the character of a letter, because they are often personally addressed. In general, then, the New Testament books come to us in the form of letters. The Epistle to the Romans is the first.

A letter is a classical literary form. For the Bible this is remarkable, because in the Old Testament not a single book was written in the form of a letter. There are letters here and there, but that is also the case in the New Testament. In Romans 15 the apostles are given a letter to take with them. That is then a letter within a letter.

A letter has a personal character and is generally not intended for everyone, unless it is an open letter. If possible, a letter is sent in an envelope. That was also the case in antiquity. The letter is intended only for the addressee. That immediately places us in a special position. God has officially distanced Himself from the world. He has let go of the world and taken distance from it. That is an important fact. This places the epistles in a very different framework from the Old Testament books. All the books of the New Testament were written after the resurrection of Christ; that is why they are New Testament books. Since His resurrection He hides Himself. He did still appear to one or two individuals, but those were exceptions. He hid Himself and revealed Himself only to a few, so that those few might be witnesses of His resurrection. You read this in the last chapters of the Gospels and the first of Acts.

God has therefore withdrawn Himself from the world. He was the Light of the world; He disappeared from it, and so the Light went out, and the world lives in darkness and ignorance. That is also the reason why the New Testament books come to us in the form of letters. The world lives in darkness, but to believers the Lord wrote letters. Those were intended only for believers. God does not reveal Himself to the world. That immediately answers all the philosophical questions of the world—why God, for example, does nothing about the situation in the world: “If there is a God, then where is He?” And so on.

God has let go of the world, and through the preaching that comes to us by means of the letters we are called to go out from that world as well (and that includes Judaism) and to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, or rather to God and His Word. The first letter we find in the

New Testament is therefore not written to the believers in Jerusalem, but to believers in Rome—outside Israel and among the Gentiles.
In Romans 1:1–6 we find, strictly speaking, the sender of the letter. That makes sense too, because the sender largely determines how you read a letter.
Romans 1:1
Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

It is addressed to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 1:7
From verse 8 onwards he describes his relationship with this church in Rome.
We do not know how this church came into being. Nothing is written about that, nor about who brought the gospel there—at least not in the Bible.
Paul had never yet been to Rome. Nevertheless, he knows a great many people there. In chapter 16 he sends greetings to as many as 30 people. How is that possible? Apparently there was still some connection.
Then in verses 16 and 17 he speaks about the real subject of the letter, namely the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
Greeting and salutation

Romans 1:1–7
Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)
Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;
And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:
By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:
Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:
To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Paul was originally a representative of the oversee of the law. That is why he was also called Saul, for in the Old Testament we likewise find someone called Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin. He is also a picture of the executor of the law under Israel.
Paul was one of the great leaders in Israel, zealous for the traditions of the fathers. He was a persecutor of the church and thus a persecutor of the Lord Jesus Himself (“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” — Acts 9:4).
He was seized, came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and had to study the Scriptures anew. In Judaism it is the same as in Christianity: people do not study the Bible itself, but rather what others have said and written about it. Paul had to do his homework again. Thus he became Paul—the small one, the hindered one.
He became a servant = doulos = slave, bondservant, of Jesus Christ. He was therefore the property of Jesus Christ.

Apostle = one sent (by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself).
Apostle is essentially the same as epistle = sending.
Paul was separated unto the gospel of God.
Separated = sanctified = separation unto… = dedication to….
He was taken out of the world and dedicated to the service of God.
“Separated” could also have been a translation of the word “Pharisee”.
Phariz = perez = to break, break off, separate, and thus to set apart.
Pharisees were indeed expected to be separated.
Formerly Paul was separated as a Pharisee for the service of the Lord under the law, but now unto the gospel of God.
Gospel = glad tidings. That is not entirely accurate. The Old Testament word for it is basar. That is usually translated as “good news”, but it actually concerns a message that was to be expected. Everyone was supposed to know that what was awaited would one day come to pass. If one looked forward to it with joy, then its arrival is indeed glad tidings. Think of a pregnancy: one is in joyful expectation, and after nine months a son or daughter is born. That is the glad tidings. It was expected, and now it has come. In most cases, then, it is glad tidings, but it need not be. When Saul died, that message (basar) came to David, but for him it was no glad tidings at all.
The gospel is therefore a message that was expected and has now come. That is also stated in the rest of the greeting. The gospel, namely, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures. It concerns the preaching of something that was promised and has now come. What was promised? A Man in the image and likeness of God—Adam. Or the seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent’s head; the Son of Abraham; a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek; the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; the New Covenant.
There were many promises, and all God’s promises are yea and amen in Christ. All those promises result in the coming of the Son of David, the Son of God, the Messiah. From Adam to the resurrection of Christ covers roughly a period of 4000 years. All that time the coming of the Messiah was promised, but when He appeared, men would have none of Him. That is what Romans 1 is about.
The gospel is that God has fulfilled the promises He made to the fathers for us, their children, in that He raised up Jesus from the dead (Acts 13:32: “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children,”). For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:39).
God made promises, and He has now fulfilled them in the resurrection of Christ. The content of the gospel is therefore, as briefly as possible, the preaching of the resurrection of Christ. That was promised: a High Priest after the power of an endless life; a Son of David whose throne would not be moved for ever. It concerns Someone who has overcome death. As soon as that had happened, this was openly preached. For God now declares unto all men everywhere this message. Why? Because it has meanwhile been fulfilled. God has raised up that Man by whom He will judge the world (Acts 17:30–31).
The preaching of the gospel is therefore the preaching of historical facts (saving facts) that have taken place and that God had promised beforehand. God has done what He said He would do and what He had announced He would do.

The gospel is not some feeble story about being nice and living decently and then all will be well. That is utter nonsense.
It is the gospel of God, for He had promised it afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures. Elsewhere it is said that these promises of God are announced by all the prophets and in all the holy scriptures.
The Holy Scriptures = all the books of the Old Testament. They are called Old Testament because they date from the days of God's promises.
Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, concerning His Son. The gospel of God concerns the Son of God. If He had not risen from the dead, He would not have been the Son of God. The Bible teaches that He became the Son of God by His resurrection.
Son = successor, heir.
The Lord Jesus, in His resurrection, was appointed Son, appointed heir. After His resurrection the Lord Jesus therefore said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." When? After His resurrection. This implies that He did not have that power before His resurrection. At the beginning of His official public ministry the devil appeared to Him. He at least appeared to have all power over the earth. He said: "All this power will I give thee, if…". The Lord Jesus did not say that was impossible because He already had that power. Nor did He deny that the devil had power over the earth. Just before His crucifixion the Lord Jesus said to Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." The Lord Jesus was therefore subject. That is evident too, for He was crucified. Only afterwards, in His resurrection, was all power given Him in heaven and in earth.
That is also the preaching in Acts. The Lord Jesus has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God, and made both Lord and Christ, and the Prince of life. In short, He is the One whom God has appointed to judge the whole earth.
The gospel of God—His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Jesus Christ is that Son of God. The gospel is the message about this Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.
In parentheses it says that that Son was made of the seed of David. It does not say that He was from eternity. Indeed, it also does not say that He was not from eternity, but it does say that He was of the seed of David.
Whoever He was before His resurrection, He was not then the Son of God. That could not be, for when in the Old Testament it was announced that God would have a Son, it was said to David that out of his body One would come forth who would sit upon the throne of His father David, a throne that would not be moved. "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Samuel 7:14). Not that He was already His Son then, for that could not be at all, since this Son had to come forth from David. Where then does this Son of God come from? He would be born as man from David. That is stated here too. As concerning the flesh He has come of the seed of David.
That Son was powerfully declared to be the Son of God. The Greek word translated "declared" is horizo.
Horizo comes from horizon = boundary, limit. Determining the end and thus the destiny. The word is elsewhere always translated "ordain" or "determine".
We are ordained (horizo) in Christ to sonship. Our destiny is therefore this sonship.
This Son is therefore powerfully ordained to be the Son of God.
Ordain = appoint. So: who is powerfully appointed Son of God.

How and when was He appointed Son of God? When was Jacob appointed son of Isaac? Esau and Jacob came from Isaac, but the question is which of the two receives the birthright. Which of the two is appointed son? That happens at a certain moment and is a great event. With Jacob it happened when he was blessed by Isaac.
With the Lord Jesus it happened according to verse 4 at His resurrection from the dead. Then God said to Him: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” According to Paul in Acts 13 that was fulfilled when God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.
He is powerfully ordained to be the Son of God, according to the spirit of holiness. That is the Holy Ghost. The Lord received that Spirit at His resurrection. The Holy Ghost is pictured in the anointing oil. In Isaiah 61:1 the Lord Jesus said beforehand: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me…” He later read that text in the synagogue (Luke 4:18).
By the resurrection from the dead. “By” = on the ground of.
He is therefore powerfully ordained to be the Son of God by receiving the Holy Ghost, on the ground of the fact that He rose from the dead. The Son and Heir of David rose from the dead and was placed by God at His right hand and appointed Son and Heir of God. That is the core of the gospel. That is why Paul already incorporates this in the greeting of his letter. This determines who Paul is and what his ministry is. This he preaches as apostle and evangelist.
John 7:38–39
He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)There is only talk of the Holy Ghost since His resurrection from the dead.
Acts 2:33
Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
The Lord Jesus received the Holy Ghost in His resurrection, and of that Holy Ghost He now pours out. He was the first to receive Him, but gives Him to everyone who believes. In the Old Testament people occasionally received the Spirit of God (never the Holy Ghost), but always only temporarily. Since the resurrection of Christ one receives the Holy Ghost. That is definitive, because it is connected with being born of the Holy Ghost and thus with regeneration and eternal life. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was His regeneration. At His resurrection He received eternal life and thus the Holy Ghost. On that occasion He was appointed Firstborn and thus Son of God.
We believers too shall be appointed sons of God, but that is only after our bodily resurrection from the dead. That is why we are called unto sonship—unfortunately translated as “adoption”.
Our Lord. He is the One we serve. Just as Paul served Him as slave, as servant, as doulos.

Romans 1:5
By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

We have received grace, namely the apostleship. Grace is more than forgiveness of sins. Grace is all the unmerited favour we receive from God. Paul regards it as grace that he—and we too—can and may serve the Lord, because He has made us able for it.
For obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name. Paul was sent out to preach the gospel of God, with the intention that that gospel would be obeyed, or believed. Obedience to the faith is therefore not obedience of the faith. “To the faith” is a further explanation of what obedience really is. You could read it as “obedience, namely faith”, for obedience and faith are synonymous concepts.
Obedience = hearing to and thereby submitting to…. Think of serfs. A serf is a bondservant and thus a slave. A slave receives orders, commands, from his master.
Romans 1:14–15
I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Romans 1:8
First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.
This can mean two things. It can mean that what the Romans believed was preached throughout the whole world, but it can also mean that it was preached how greatly these Romans were believers. It is probably the latter: that the church in Rome had a great reputation throughout the whole world. Not the content of the faith, but their faith itself was spoken of throughout the whole world.
Although how the church in Rome came into being is not stated in the Bible, there is some information about it outside the Bible.
This church arose around the British royal family. They were held there in captivity, in the same way as Paul—a kind of voluntary captivity, in which they had appealed to the emperor. This British prince, Caradoc, and his family had come to faith, and around them the church arose.
This was in the days when the Romans had once again tried to conquer Britain, which ultimately succeeded in part. Britannia is the name for the southern part of England. The king, with his whole family, was taken captive, brought to Rome, and there received pardon from the emperor. They had to remain in exile in Rome for seven years; afterwards they were allowed to return home, on condition that they would not take up arms against the Romans again. So it happened. The emperor gave them a place to live in Rome, which became known as the Palatium Britannicum.
That British royal house was therefore a Christian family. In our days it is still said that the oldest Christian church building on the continent is what remains of the Palatium Britannicum, the British palace in Rome. That is the Basilica di Santa Pudenziana, named after one of the daughters of Claudia and Pudens (Claudia was the daughter of Caradoc). The church itself is of later date, but beneath it the remains of the old Palatium Britannicum can still be found. Unfortunately, one cannot go inside, but there are photographs of it. They call it the house of Pudens, but it is therefore the Palatium Britannicum. It was there that this church arose.
When the British royal family returned to Britannia—at least in part—they handed the property over to the local Christian community.

It can also be demonstrated by another route that these Britons were in reality the direct heirs of the tribe of Ephraim. The British prince must therefore be regarded as the direct successor in line of Joseph. He is thus the bearer of the birthright in Israel. That is why the Bible also teaches that the church out of Jews and Gentiles is the heir of the birthright, as God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Ephraim. Thus it came to the Britons. Thus Christianity immediately came under the protection of the first Christian royal family on earth. Thus the promises of God were fulfilled in these days in which God hides Himself.
That faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. That is why the story about it has remained known in Christian literature. It is not in all church history books, but it is known and well documented. https://www.youtube.com/@UncoveredBiblicalHistory
In Avalon, the present Glastonbury, the first church was built, by the way. The gospel was preached throughout the whole world, not from Jerusalem or Rome, but from Britannia.
Their reputation was therefore spoken of throughout the whole world.
Colossians 1:5–6
For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;
Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:
The gospel was preached in those days throughout the whole world, and it brought forth fruit. That was the intention, but it actually happened. The gospel was then preached among all nations. That had to be so, for the Bible also says that all nations, at least at government level, rejected the gospel—except the Britons, who even as a people came to faith.
Their reputation was therefore spoken of throughout the whole world.

Romans 1:9–11
For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;
Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.
For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;
Paul very much wanted to go to Rome, because he realised that there one found the church at the highest level. It is even reasonably demonstrable that Paul was related to the British royal family through marriages. On the other hand, this British royal family was the representative of the tribe of Joseph, but Paul was the representative of the tribe of Benjamin, the full brother of Joseph. In the days after King Solomon a separation was made between Judah and the other tribes of Israel, but the tribe of Benjamin was added to Judah, to function as a lamp for Judah. So that there might be a lamp from God with Judah. Benjamin was expected to represent the light of the Word of God to Judah. That presupposes that this light comes from the ten tribes and shines to and is given to Judah.
Paul, as a Benjamite, probably felt more connected to the Britons than to the Jews. This explains Paul's longing for the church in Rome. There he feels at home—as a Roman citizen, as a Benjamite, and of course above all as a Christian. (St Paul's Cathedral in

London is built on the spot where Paul preached the gospel. That place is still marked by a stone in the ground.)

Romans 1:11
For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;
Paul of course has a ministry.

Romans 1:12
That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.
Paul feels connected to these believers in Rome. The story goes that Caradoc came to faith through the preaching of Paul, so that he came to faith more or less last of the whole family.

Romans 1:13–15
Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.
I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Greeks and Barbarians.
“Greeks” is not the term for people of Greek descent, but for those who speak Greek and thus live within Greek culture. Therefore the word “Greeks” is the designation for all who are part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire had a Greek culture. The Roman language was indeed Latin, but the language of scholarship was Greek.
“Greek” therefore means not Jews, but Gentiles—and actually only those Gentiles who are part of the Roman Empire. Were there then also lands that did not form part of the Roman Empire? Yes, Britannia. Everything that did not belong to the Roman Empire was called not Greek, but barbarous. All who lived outside the Roman Empire were considered uncivilised. In practice the situation was very different, for there were Romans—even belonging to the imperial family—who received their education in Britannia. The reverse also happened: members of the British royal family, but also other Britons, received their education in Rome. There was exchange of trade, but also of culture and scholarship. Nevertheless, those who did not belong to the Roman Empire were called Barbarians, but the word did not have such a offensive meaning as it has today.
Greeks are considered wise, and Barbarians are considered unwise. Paul had to preach the gospel to all, both within and outside the Roman Empire.

The subject of the epistle

Romans 1:16–17
For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
If you are ashamed of something, you cover it. Shameful parts are covered. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 that we have removed the covering, for when one comes to Christ, He takes away the covering. As one surrenders to Him, He takes away that covering. We have rejected these shameful coverings. We do not do as Moses, by putting a covering over the face. The message would be preached fully without any restraint. That is what Paul says here too.
The gospel of Christ is the power of God. The gospel is a message; it consists of words, but words are power. All things were made by the Word (John 1:3: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”). Without the Word nothing was made that was made. Now perhaps you also better understand the connection between word and becoming. Something always becomes from word. By the word you also become what you have become.
The Word of God is the power of God, but of course only for those who believe. If you do not listen to the Word, do not obey, then you gain nothing from it.
The preaching of that Word brings man to salvation. The Word does not merely show us the way; it brings us to that salvation. Not human striving and words that man himself devised, but what God reveals gives us salvation. It is not a power, but power. There is no “a” in the Greek.
The gospel is the power of God, because the righteousness of God is revealed in it. The gospel is the self-revelation of God. God makes Himself known. That is what man wants too, is it not? If there is a God, let Him then…. God has done something and makes Himself known, but if you do not want to listen, you gain nothing from it. Man seeks salvation and tries to bring about that salvation in every possible way, but it does not come. That is why man always remains dissatisfied. One wants to achieve something, one thinks one must achieve something, one must set goals in life, but it oozes out that nothing will come of it. The only thing one needs is simply to listen to the Word of God, for that is the power of God unto salvation. Where we fill ourselves with this Word of God, there we are filled with the life of God and thereby with the salvation of God.
There is only one power that leads to salvation, and that is the power of the gospel of God, of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You are not ashamed of that, for why would you be ashamed of the power of God unto salvation? That power is there first of all for Jew and Greek. In principle there is no difference between them, except that it was so, for unto the Jews were committed the oracles of God.
The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, for the righteousness of God is revealed in it.
The righteousness of God is first of all that He is faithful to God’s right.
Righteous = skilled in right.
That right is written down and is nothing other than the Word of God. If God is righteous, this means that He holds to His Word. If a man is unrighteous, this means that he does not hold to the Word of God. In unrighteousness you let go of the Word. That is sin and brings guilt with it. The gospel makes that righteousness manifest. It makes manifest that man is indeed unfaithful to God’s Word, but God Himself is faithful to it.
The words of Romans 1:16 and 17 find their logical continuation in Romans 3 from verse 21. The exposition as it begins in Romans 1 is broken off after verse 17 and continues in Romans 3:21. There the thread is taken up again.

The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, for it is written that the just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4). This is not further explained here, but instead the other side of the story is explained. In what follows it is described why there is need of this gospel and why it is important to know that the righteousness of God is revealed. For that stands opposite the unrighteousness of man in general. That is described from verse 18 up to chapter 3. In chapter 3 the unrighteousness of man is set against the righteousness of God. Man is unfaithful, but God is faithful. Man is unbelieving, but God is believing.
From faith to faith = the righteousness is not only made known, but also takes shape from faith, and moreover through it one also comes to faith. The righteousness of God, and thus also salvation, proceeds from faith. Salvation proceeds from the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. That salvation and that faith comes upon all who believe. The faith of Jesus Christ is the cause, the origin, of our salvation. If He had not remained faithful to the Word of God, that salvation would not have existed, and if that salvation does not exist, you cannot get any part of it either. That salvation is brought forth by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That work would have meant nothing if it had not been in accordance with and in obedience to God.
The just shall live by the faith of Jesus Christ, for we live on the ground of His faith and His faithfulness. For we have an High Priest who is faithful to Him that appointed Him. He is faithful to His heavenly Father. We reap the fruits of that, for in these days He does a work in us, at God's command. Paul does not go further into it here, but returns to it later. First he deals with the conditions in heathendom.

Conditions in heathendom

Romans 1:18–32

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness,

maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Romans 1:18
For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.
The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. Man needs it, because he is not saved, but unrighteous. This unrighteousness of man is set against the righteousness of God. The same applies to the disobedience of man and his unbelief. Man therefore needs that gospel.
Here the epistle actually begins. The preceding part was the introduction, in which verses 16 and 17 state what the content of the epistle is.
From verse 18 it is told how the situation actually is.
The wrath of God is revealed over everything and everyone. Wrath corresponds to judgement. Here it is called wrath, but in John 3 it is called judgement.
John 3:18
He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
This is not about the judgement on the Last Day, but about the present judgement of God. That judgement has been there since the Lord Jesus Christ withdrew Himself from this world. The Light is gone, and so the world lives in darkness. He came to save men, but the world would have none of Him. The purpose of His coming into the world was not judgement upon mankind. Quite the contrary. He that believeth on Him (in the present tense) is not condemned. He that believeth not is condemned already. That is now, in this present time. He that believeth not now lives under the judgement of God. What judgement is that? It is stated immediately in the next verse.
John 3:19
And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Romans 1:20
For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
You do not need to search with your eyes, for God is invisible.
Yet when we study creation, we ought at the very least to see something of God's eternal power and Godhead. Creation bears the signature of the Creator, and from it one comes to know Him. In former times, science was pursued solely for that purpose.
Eternal power = namely Godhead. God is God because He possesses eternal power. That can be recognised in creation. One can know God from Scripture and from the creature.
Mankind possessed the knowledge of God. Not in the sense of ready-made knowledge, but if they had wanted to know, they could have known—even without a Bible. But they

did not want to know. Man possessed His knowledge and is therefore accountable for it. If they still do not know, they are without excuse. God had so arranged it that man could find Him, but where man does not seek Him, that is man's own responsibility.

Romans 1:21
Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
"Knew God" = they possessed the knowledge.
"Glorified" = gave thanks.
God Himself gives man life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:25: "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;"), and cannot be served by human hands. Man stands in a receiving position towards God. If one knows and acknowledges God, one will thank Him for it and thereby give Him the glory that is due to Him. That was not done. The result is that man has no knowledge or wisdom left at all.
"Vain" = become empty or made empty. Man deliberates a great deal, but those deliberations are empty. They have no real substance. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! If one is left only with what is under the sun, then everything is empty.
"Foolish heart" = we think understanding resides in the head, but according to biblical thought, understanding is part of the inner man, and the inner man is called the heart in the Bible.
It is called a foolish heart because the fear of the Lord is indeed the beginning of all wisdom. The heart is foolish because one does not believe, for with the heart man believeth. A man is not foolish because he lacks intelligence, but because he does not believe.
Their deliberations are vain and their heart is darkened. That is the same thing said twice. There is nothing in that man, because he has rejected the knowledge of God.

Romans 1:22
Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
Man boasts of human wisdom, but in reality he knows nothing. What he knows concerns perishable things. Those pass away, so what he knows he loses again tomorrow. Every generation is busy reinventing the wheel, which shows that nothing is truly learned. One generation comes and another goes, and there is nothing new under the sun.

Romans 1:23
And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
"Changed into" = replaced with.
Men have made man himself—and even birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things—into gods. Even in Christian circles, humanity is often regarded as the highest good. The greatest human—and also Christian—good is said to be taking good care of nature, preserving it, and thus serving it. God has entrusted the world to us, and what He apparently could not do Himself, we must now do. But nature does not depend on us, but on God. We should therefore serve Him.

Romans 1:24
Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
Because man has replaced God with creatures, God has let man go and given him over to the lusts of their hearts. Man may now go for a time without God. As man has let God go, so God lets man go.
“Gave them up” carries the sense of limiting, taking captive. Man has lost a great deal and has therefore become limited. Moreover, a dark world is by definition a small world. Ask anyone who is blind: their world is no larger than the reach of their stick. That is a cramped little world.
God gave them up = God has hidden Himself from the world.
Even many Christians think they must fight the injustice in the world, but the Bible says that God has precisely given the world over to that misery and injustice. If they will not have the Judge, then only injustice remains. Then they complain: “We live in a world full of misery and injustice; why does God do nothing about it?” But they did not want that God and rejected Him. That is why God withdrew Himself.
The unbelieving heart has desire unto uncleanness.

Romans 1:25
Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Romans 1:26
For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:
Man has changed the truth into a lie. They have honoured the creature—and thus creation—above the Creator. Therefore God has let them go.It is not our task now to do something about these evils, for God has given man over to them. We, on the contrary, should go out from this world and walk in the light, so that our life may indeed bring forth fruit.
It is said three times—in verses 24, 26, and 28—using the same terms:

Romans 1:24
Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Romans 1:26
For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Romans 1:28
And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
You cannot miss it. It is brought forward with great emphasis.

Romans 1:27
And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust

one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.
Paul speaks primarily about homosexuality. He mentions it not because it is a greater sin than any other, but because it is symptomatic, illustrative. Where these things are present, men receive the recompense of their error.
If one does not acknowledge the Creator above the creation, that expresses itself everywhere this relationship between Creator and creation takes shape. The relationship between Creator and creation is the same as that between man and woman, and thus also between male and female. If creation no longer acknowledges the Creator, that means the woman no longer acknowledges the man, but also the reverse: the man no longer knows the woman as such. Then confusion arises in these concepts, and that expresses itself in homosexuality. The two kinds are no longer known—at least the order between the two kinds is not. Man regards the disappearance of the distinction between man and woman as enlightenment and modernity, as an advance in human civilisation. But where that order is no longer known—because no God above is acknowledged—there it leads to such things. Where hierarchy is no longer acknowledged, chaos automatically reigns. Democracy is the last straw to which one can cling. In reality, power to the people is utter foolishness. The people should be governed by a power placed above the people. That is why democracy is inherently un-biblical. No authority is acknowledged any longer, and that expresses itself everywhere—not only in society and politics, but also in marriage and family.
Those problems can only be resolved by acknowledging the Creator and giving Him glory. From that relationship all other relationships are restored. This principle naturally applies within the church as well, for Christ is the Head of the church and the man is the head of the woman, as Christ is the Head of the church. Therefore wives should be subject to their husbands, as the church is subject to Christ. These things cannot be separated from one another, but they have been separated. That is why they are no longer understood. Wisdom has vanished from the world. That is what this passage is about.
God withdraws Himself, and so only the feminine and chaos remain, because there are no longer any proper relationships. That is the recompense that belongs to it. The one is the logical consequence of the other.

Romans 1:28–32
And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.
All these things have to do with broken relationships. Consider all those terms. No one knows any longer what the standard is; hence the search for norms and values. The only norms and values that exist are those of God Himself. If you reject them, nothing

remains. The people searching for norms and values themselves have no norms and values. That is why they never arrive at any conclusion. There is one standard, and that is God and His Word.

Romans 1:32
Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.
Man occupies himself with these things, and insofar as he does not do them himself, he still takes pleasure when others do. No greater entertainment than murder and mayhem, disaster, misery, and so on. If those things are not in a film, we do not want to see it. Entertainment is determined by these things.
It is sometimes said, "God punishes immediately," but that is 100% un-biblical. God does not punish in our days. He intervenes from time to time so that He can carry out His plan of salvation in the world, but insofar as He does so, He does it in secret. You cannot therefore know it. You can know with certainty that God is carrying out His plan. That is why we also know that no one can exterminate the Jewish people, for He still has a plan with them. They are the bearers of the mark of Cain. They wander and roam over the earth, and everyone seeks to kill them, but it does not succeed (Cain is a picture of the Jewish people in our days). God made promises to that people and will fulfil those promises. But in general, God has let the world go. The preaching of the gospel is the call to leave this world, to step out of it. To go forth outside the camp and there share in the reproach of Christ, but ultimately to share in His glory. The Lord has let the world go, and we should do the same.
God's judgement will come, but not yet. That is the thrust of the following section of Scripture.

The unrepentance of the Jews

Romans 2:1–2
Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.
But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.
Man is full of judgements about others. Christians do this too. Everyone does those same things themselves. So why condemn another for them? That does not add up.

Romans 2:3
And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
God does not judge yet, but He certainly will in the future. And that judgement you cannot escape.

Romans 2:4
Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Peter speaks only of the longsuffering of God, but here it is the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God. Paul calls that in Ephesians the grace of God, the reign of grace. That should not be despised, for God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). We should make use of that longsuffering, forbearance, and goodness of God, and even now come to repentance, and so make use of the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

Romans 2:5
But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.
That is not the judgement that comes upon man in this time because of God's longsuffering, but only in the day of wrath. It is now the day of salvation and the acceptable time (2 Corinthians 6:2), but in the future there will still come a day of wrath, and then the wrath of God will come upon mankind, even upon the individual. In practice this means that if someone has died before that time, he will in the future rise from the dead and have to appear before the great white throne, as described in Revelation 20. One will have to give account for every sin, and the longer one lives, the bigger the pile becomes. Thus one treasures up wrath of God throughout one's life.

Romans 2:6
Who will render to every man according to his deeds:
"Will render" = future tense, so in that day of the Lord.
God does not primarily look at the works, but works prove to come from the heart of man. What is in the heart expresses itself in works. Man looks at what is before the eyes, but the Lord looks at the heart. Works proceed from faith or unbelief. Insofar as our works are judged, they will be works of faith, for God does not count the old man. Therefore we shall not be punished for the works of the old man, but shall receive reward for the works of faith.
They are the good works over against the evil works, or the works of God over against the works of the devil.

Romans 2:11
For there is no respect of persons with God.
We should abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"). And we should keep our manner of life honest among the Gentiles (1 Peter 2:12: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."). In verse 11 it speaks of the soul, and in verse 12 of our manner of life (conversation).
When the Old Testament speaks of "dead bodies," you may be certain that the Hebrew reads "dead souls." Man does not have an immortal soul, for the soul that sinneth, it shall die. When someone dies, his soul dies. Then he no longer walks. The body returns to corruption. There is no more walking. The only thing that remains is the spirit.
God formed man from the dust of the ground (that is his body), and God breathed into him the breath of life, and so man became a living soul—a walking, active soul. The soul is therefore the active life of man.

When we pursue a hobby with heart and soul, our thoughts go out to it (heart), and we do it with full commitment (soul). The willing and the working.
There is no respect of persons with God. That has to do with the soul. The person is the outward aspect of man.
Person = persona;
Per = through
Sona = sound
Person = that through which sound comes. It is a mask. You put such a thing on, and sound comes through it. The mask is the mask of an actor. In former times, when playing a role, a mask was always worn. You still see that in China. Through it you can see what someone represents. And he speaks, as it were, through it.
Because a person is the designation of a traditional actor, the word is also used for the role that a person plays. Hence you can have a play for so many persons. If you have a play for four persons, you do not really need four actors, for one actor can wear several masks. The four persons are not the four actors, but the four roles. Someone can therefore play a double role.
God therefore does not accept the outward appearance of anyone. It makes no difference to Him whether someone is circumcised or not, whether someone is a Jew or a Gentile, whether someone lived under the law or not. That concerns the person, the role someone plays. If people behave decently, you still do not know whether they are decent people. He may be a decent person outwardly, but that says little about what is in his heart.
The difficulty here is that God first says He will render to every man according to his deeds (that is the outward), and then says there is no respect of persons with God (that is also the outward). God does indeed look at the outward of someone, but the works he does are supposed to be the expression of what he is inwardly. Man looks at what is before his eyes, but God looks at the heart. Man sees the person, the works, but God knows what is in man. He knows the hidden things of men and will judge them too (according to verse 16).

The Jews and the Law

Romans 2:12-13
For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;
The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.
Verse 11 is the introduction to the following section. Both verses begin with “for.”
First the Jew and the Greek come under judgement, for there is no respect of persons with God, for as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.
Mankind had no law at all until Moses, yet they died. From that you can conclude that sin was at work in them and that they perished because of it.
Sinned without law. “Without” and “sinned” are in fact related words. To be without law means to have nothing to do with the law. To have sinned means that you have missed the mark and are without. Without the law one has no law, yet without the law one also sins.
As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. Whether you have the law or not, you will still be judged, so it makes no difference. If you have the law, you are only

worse off, for then you can no longer say you did not know. If you have a law, you are more responsible. That also determines the special position of Israel. The question is to what extent sin is imputable, culpable, punishable. That does indeed depend on whether one knew or not; how consciously one sinned, for then one knew of it.

Romans 2:13
(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified;
You cannot do the law, so no one is justified by the law. However much you read the law, reread it, or have it read to you, that does not set you free.
To justify = to declare righteous; to pronounce just.
When the Bible says "to make righteous," that is a wrong translation. That cannot be. It is to declare righteous. The judge declares someone righteous when he finds no guilt in him.
Thou shalt justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked (Deuteronomy 25:1). A righteous man is already righteous. If he is not righteous, he must not be declared righteous, but condemned. When we are justified by God, it means He pronounces us free.
If you do not transgress the law, you may be acquitted by the judge, but if you know the law and do not keep it, you are obviously not acquitted.
The Jews are not doers of the law, but hearers of the law. That is tragic enough, because they take great pains to keep their Jewish laws. Nevertheless, they transgress the law of God, so they might as well have spared themselves all that other trouble, for whoever transgresses one commandment is guilty of the whole law.

Romans 2:14
For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves;
A Gentile = someone who lives in a hut on the heath.
The word heathen (noun) is indeed a substantivization (or noun use) of the adjective *heathen* (relating to those who do not acknowledge the God of the Bible, or who are uncivilized) It is generally accepted that this Germanic word is connected with "heath," originally "wild land," and in Gothic also "field, meadow." The original meaning "inhabitant of the wild land" shifted to a pejorative meaning "wild inhabitant," comparable to the negative sense of "boorish." With the coming of Christianity, this contemptuous meaning acquired its specific current sense, just as happened with late Latin paganus "pagan; heathen" [second half of the 4th century]. In classical Latin it still meant only "rural, rustic; countryman, villager" from pagus "countryside, village." The late Latin extension arose because Christianity first spread mainly in the cities.
A Gentile here is therefore someone who does not have the law. Jews have the Jewish law, and Gentiles do not.
The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law. They do not have the Mosaic law, but they have their own standard and thus their own law. The first law is that you shall love the Lord your God. There are plenty of Gentiles who do that. We do not have the law, yet we love the God of the Jews.
Whether you have been given a law or have become a law to yourself makes no practical difference. Everyone has principles by which he lives. They need not be

absolute standards, for standards are fixed measures. The principles by which many people live are not fixed at all, but constantly change.

Romans 2:15
Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;
Apparently the law is written in their hearts. To Israel, who lived under the law, it was announced that God would one day bring that law to an end, after which a New Covenant would come, in which the Lord would write the laws of that New Covenant in our hearts. God would write His law not on tables of stone, but on tables of flesh, namely in the hearts of men. The law apparently stands in the way of this work of God.
Another term for heart used here is conscience. That is also the inner man, but more specifically a particular function of it.
Thoughts accusing or excusing one another = one thought accuses another thought, and vice versa. That is the working of the conscience, the co-knowledge, the conscience.
Con = with
Science = knowledge
Man knows something together with God by nature. There is a certain divine knowledge in man.
What we call conscience, the Bible calls “custom” or “habit.” Man can develop habits in his life. As soon as he deviates from them, he suffers from what he wrongly calls his conscience.
Man knows by nature that there is a God. He also knows that things such as love, joy, peace, truth, righteousness, and so on exist. All his life he searches to find those things, while others think: “I am not going to search for them, for I shall not find them anyway.” Whoever finds them has come to the Lord.
The world wonders what love is, but if one does not know what it is, how does one come by the word for it?
What is righteous? If one does not know what it is, how is it that one still searches for it?
What is truth? If it does not exist, why search for it? That is the working of the conscience.
When a Gentile seeks honour and conscience, he finds the Lord, and he will be a law to himself. He knows what he must do and holds to certain principles, not because they are prescribed or imposed, but because they are in his heart.
Verses 13–15 are in parentheses. That is to indicate that the main sentence in verse 12 continues in verse 16. You then get the following sentence:

Romans 2:12 and 16
For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; [...]
In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.
In between it is said that one must not merely hear the law, but do it. It is not called the law of works for nothing.

Nevertheless, God will judge, whether you lived under the law or not. God will judge the secrets of men. That is not the outward, the person, nor the works as such, but what is in the heart of man. It concerns whether they are works of faith or works of unbelief.
The secrets = not the hidden things that were covered but have been revealed and can therefore be known, but the cryptic things, the things that really cannot be known, because they are inside man.
The first is mysterion, the second is kryptos.
Kryptos cannot be seen at all, but with God all things are known, so He will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. For God has committed all judgement to the Son.
Acts 17:30–31
And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.
It is preached to all men everywhere that the Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and that He will one day judge mankind. Man is on his way to that judgement.

Romans 2:17–20
Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,
And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;
And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,
An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.
Paul now addresses the Jews directly. Judaism is characterised by having the law, whereas the Gentiles do not have the law. The Jew who has the law serves in the Bible as a rather caricatural (that is, an exaggerated depiction highlighting certain traits) example of all religion. In the Jews, all characteristics are in fact exaggerated. Every detail of normal human life is governed by the law. Everything goes according to rules, according to ridiculous rules. That is a representation of what religion actually is.
Although this speaks of the Jews, Israel serves as an example for all people and all nations, for it expresses the Word of God, but also the misuse of it. When it speaks of the law, we think it concerns the Jewish law. That is usually the case, but sometimes you read in one breath “law,” namely the elementary principles of the world.
Thou art called a Jew. Then it is said what that entails:

- The Jew rests in the law. Judaism is supposed to be based on the law. That is why the Jews have an identity problem. They no longer know who they are, because many Jews who feel Jewish and call themselves so are in practice not adherents of the Jewish religion at all. If they do not adhere to that religion, how then are they still Jews? In many cases Zionism is put in its place, but that is quite another thing.
- The Jew boasts in God. They are, after all, God’s own people.
- The Jew knows the will of God and approves the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.

- The Jew sees himself as a guide of the blind. The Jewish people are supposed to be seeing, to have wisdom. They are supposed to be first among the nations on earth. They are a royal and priestly people. In other words, they should teach the Gentiles. That is forbidden them by the Talmud, for if the Gentiles know the same as the Jews, the distinction disappears.
- They were to have been a light to those in darkness. For unto them were committed the oracles of God (Romans 3:2).
- The Jew is supposed to be an instructor of the foolish. They are supposed to possess the knowledge and the truth as revealed in the law. They have the form of it, the outward shape. That is true enough, for the law is a law of forms, of rituals, of outward things, of works. They have that form.

Paul does not emphasise that knowledge and truth, but the form of it. It is not about the outward form of the law, but about the essence of the law. That they should know. If all is well, we come to understand that all those laws express spiritual truths. For example, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. Paul then asks whether God cares for oxen. No, God does not care for oxen, but for men. What is laid down in that law is the simple truth that he who ploughs should eat of the fruit. A man lives from the work he does. If an ox is used to thresh and must walk through the grain to pull the threshing sledge, you must not muzzle him, for while he does his work, he may eat of it. In Corinth (where this is cited), the point is that if someone preaches the gospel, he should live of it, and so the collection follows. Not muzzling the ox is law, but one should consider what lies behind it. People no longer understand that outward things are the expression of inward things. The Jews have the outward form, but they have no idea what it is about.
The Jews have a certain form of arrogance. They are God's people and they have the truth. But Paul says they have only the outward form, while it is about the inward. The outward is called religion, the inward faith. That is why the New Testament explains to us what the Old Testament represents.

Romans 2:21–22
Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?
Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?
If you rob the holy things and thereby rob God, that is equivalent to idolatry. If one serves idols, one does not serve the Lord.

Romans 2:23
Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?
They are hearers of the law, but not doers of the law. They have only an outward form, and the inward is lacking. Religion is outward form without content. Faith is simply accepting what God says. Religion is man offering something to God; faith is man accepting what God offers him. Our salvation consisted in being delivered from the law and thus from religion. Since then we live by faith, by what God has said and taught us.

Romans 2:24
For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.
There are of course many more Scripture passages that say exactly the same, but here only two are cited. The idea is that although Israel is God's people, where they are disobedient to God and certainly do not believe Him, the result is that the name of the Lord is blasphemed.
If the present Jewish state had arisen by God's appointment—as some would have us believe—why then, after more than 100 years, has that state still not come into a position of rest? If that is the work of God and He can do no better, then I want nothing to do with that God.

Romans 2:25 (KJV)
For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.
Although this passage speaks about circumcision, it actually concerns the whole Jewish culture—the life under the law—of which circumcision is the most obvious expression. The most prominent feature is named, but the whole is meant.
Circumcision stands for the Jewish people, and uncircumcision for the Gentiles. Perhaps those Gentiles are also circumcised, but that makes no difference here.

Romans 2:26 (KJV)
Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?
This verse corresponds to verse 14. What in verse 14 is called the Gentiles, who by nature do the things of the law, is here called the uncircumcision that keeps the righteousness of the law. It is the same as the Gentiles who by nature do the things of the law.
Circumcision is a picture of regeneration, and the removal of the foreskin is a picture of the removal of the outward man and therefore also of religion (the law is a covering, and that is taken away—see 2 Corinthians 3).

Romans 2:27 (KJV)
And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?
Here it is suggested that the Jewish people, living under the law, will be judged by Gentiles who are not even circumcised but who truly love God with all their heart and all their soul and with everything that is in them (= the summary of the law). By believing Gentiles, therefore. That is exactly what is set forth in Romans 9–11, for that naturally refers to the church. Officially not Jewish but Gentile and uncircumcised.
Israel will be judged by the church, and the church will take a position above Israel in the new creation. Even more, the church will judge the world and even angels.

Romans 2:28 (KJV)
For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:
That is twice the same thing. It does not concern the outward in the flesh.

Romans 2:29 (KJV)
But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.It concerns a circumcision of the heart, in the spirit. Not literally. One is a Jew only if one is circumcised in a spiritual sense. That is not a subtlety of Paul, but this already stood in the Old Testament, in the law.
Deuteronomy 10:16 (KJV)
Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.
The foreskin of your heart is not the foreskin of your heart but the foreskin—namely your heart. It is the intention that you circumcise your heart. Not the outward man but the inward man must be circumcised. Something must change within, in our thinking. The thinking directed to the outward must be taken away. That is characteristic of man and characteristic of all human culture. In everything one does or does not do, one often thinks first of all about what others will think of it. Does it look proper? If I do this or that, can I get away with it without being immediately condemned? But it does not concern what man thinks of it, but what God thinks of it. Whether it is in accordance with the word and will of God. We should be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We should not be conformed to this world, in the sense of thinking in a worldly way. The legalistic thinking must go, the religious thinking must go. That is called circumcision of the heart.
And be no more stiffnecked. Israel was a stiff-necked and stubborn people. It would not submit to the word of God. Religion never submits to God. Religion strives to subject God to man. Religion exists to win the favour of spirits or gods. Religion is the works of man to get into God's good books. To get God to accept us and perhaps forgive our sins. We just do our damnedest and then we get Him where we want Him.
Faith, however, is humility—namely submission to the word of God.
Deuteronomy 30 is that important chapter in which the conversion of Israel as a people is spoken of in the days of the coming again of Christ, when they will naturally be placed under the New Covenant.
Deuteronomy 30:5-6
And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.
And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.
"The LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart" has in practice the same meaning as: the Lord will write His law in your hearts. The hard shell is removed and in the receptive heart the Lord God will plant His word. Receive with meekness the engrafted word (James 1:21). The meekness stands over against the stony hearts in which the word must be chiselled with force.
Jeremiah 4:4 (KJV)
Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.
You must be born again and renewed in your mind, so that you are not legalistic and religious but believing.
In Colossians 2 it stands that we are complete in Christ.

Colossians 2:11 (KJV)
In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:
A spiritual circumcision, therefore. Christ is circumcised and we in Him are also circumcised, just as we are buried and risen with Him. That does not concern the circumcision of Jesus eight days after His birth, but…Colossians 2:12 (KJV)
Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.Colossians 2:13 (KJV)
And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;Here it simply stands that circumcision is a picture of death and resurrection. We are in Christ dead, buried, and risen; in short, we are circumcised in Christ. The foreskin is therefore a picture of the old man and thereby of the old creation that was to be taken away. The outward circumcision under the Jewish religion is a picture of that.
Philippians 3:2-3
Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.
For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
Dogs are a picture of the Gentiles. The crumbs from the table are for the dogs. That woman then said: “But I belong there; so those crumbs are for me.” And the Lord acknowledged that (Mark 7:24–30).We are warned against the concision. If you have mutilated yourself, then your knife has slipped. That is a failed circumcision. But with us the circumcision has gone well, for it was a spiritual circumcision. We worship God in the spirit and are therefore circumcised with a spiritual circumcision. We rejoice in Christ Jesus and therefore have no confidence in the flesh.
The concision = those who call themselves Jews and are circumcised with an outward circumcision. They are religious, but not believing.
Evil workers are those who preach the law. They preach the Old Covenant instead of the New. They preach religion instead of faith. They are evil workers and are called dogs.
All those outward things have not the slightest meaning. In our days there is a tendency to mirror oneself on the Jewish people, to call the Jewish people the people of God, the chosen people. People then look at the Jewish State and say that God is doing His work there. But the Jewish people are not the chosen people. They were indeed in the past and will be again in the future, but not now, for we are the chosen people. Not they are circumcised—no, we are circumcised. Believers who are born again and have a part in Christ and who in practice worship Him in the spirit. If the Lord is doing a work in our days, then it is not among the Jewish people but among us. That is also evident, for look at the Jewish people and see what is happening there. Then you see that that is not the work of God.
Going back to Romans 2:7 (KJV), it concerns our seeking for glory and honour and incorruption with patience. Then we receive a part in the blessings of God. If you do not do that, you end up in tribulation and anguish. That is also the only distinction made: you submit to God’s word, or you do not. The tragedy is that the people specially chosen by God to be His royal and priestly people in practice do not let themselves be taught by God. We are expected to be taught in the word of God, so that we should inherit His blessings. In Romans 9 Paul returns to this at length. What or who then is Israel? Well, you may descend from Abraham or Jacob, but that does not yet make you an Israelite.

For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Most people have long since lost the thread there, but the Bible is clear enough about it. The people of God are formed by the believers, in general from the Gentiles, who never had the law but without the law still do the things of the law. That is to love God and serve Him, first of all with the heart.

Romans 3
The Righteousness of God
In Romans 1 the subject of this epistle was announced—namely the gospel of God, of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. That gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.
Then from verse 18 onwards it is explained why that gospel is indeed good news and why it is necessary. Namely because God has given up the world because of the unbelief of the world. Then in chapter 2 it is established that in the Old Testament there may have been a distinction between Jew and Gentile, but that distinction does not exist. At any rate not for the individual Jew and the individual Gentile. There it goes into the remark that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew as well as to the Greek, and that because of the unrighteousness of both the Jew and the Greek.
It must be stated that if one has a law, unrighteousness only becomes greater. One then knows better but does not keep it. One cannot do so either, but that is not the point here. Both—those who have the law as well as those who do not have the law, Jew and Greek, or Jew and Gentile—need that good news which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.
A message has no meaning at all if one does not take it to heart. That is one of the biblical synonyms for coming to faith.
Then follows chapter 3, above the various sections of which stands: “the advantage of the Jews”; “all men sinners”; and “righteousness by faith.” All very nice, but what this whole chapter is actually about is the righteousness of God.
Man is always fixated on his own unrighteousness and how he may possibly be delivered from it, but here it is not about the justification of man but about God’s righteousness, for that is in question.
The well-known question is: “If there is a God…?” The answer then is that God is unrighteous. If He allows so much unrighteousness in the world, then He Himself is partly to blame for it. But thereby you blaspheme His name.
You can also listen to what He Himself has to say. After all, you may not condemn anyone without first hearing him. If you then listen to Him, His word sets forth the righteousness of God—namely the gospel. If you assume that God’s work is already finished, you may come to the conclusion that something is not right and that therefore the Creator is also not right. But God’s work is not yet finished. The question is what that work is to lead to. How far have we come and where is it heading? That question is answered in the Bible. Then suddenly it looks quite different. Romans 3 speaks about that.
The heading above chapter 3 should therefore be: The Righteousness of God.
In chapters 1 and 2 it concerned the unrighteousness of man. Over against that unrighteousness of man stands the righteousness of God. That now comes up for discussion.

No distinction is therefore made between Jew and Gentile. Then you remain with the question that the Jews are after all God's chosen people. How does that work then? That must surely bring advantages.

The Advantage of the Jews

Romans 3:1 (KJV)
What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?
That is twice the same thing. Advantage is profit, and Jew is circumcision. Then follows the answer.

Romans 3:2 (KJV)
Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.
Whatever the advantage of the Jew is—for there is much advantage, says Paul—everything flows from this one thing: namely that unto them were committed the oracles of God. That is the main thing.
The words that God in times past spoke at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers, those He spoke to the fathers. As soon as Israel existed, God spoke exclusively to Israel. He made known His words to Israel. And if it so happened that God nevertheless spoke directly to Gentiles, those words were then given to Israel. God for example spoke to Nebuchadnezzar and to Cyrus, but all those words were committed to Israel and through the Israelite tradition those words come to us.
Israel is God's chosen people—not so that they would come to heaven, for they do not come there at all; nor so that they would receive eternal life, for there are very many Israelites who will not receive eternal life at all, simply because they are unbelieving. They are therefore also not chosen so that they would come to faith. The Jews are not chosen to come to faith (this approaches the doctrine of election), for the Jews in general do not come to faith. At any rate not up to now.
Israel is chosen so that it would be a royal and priestly people, a peculiar treasure unto Him, with the purpose that they would therefore receive and keep and preach His word. Priests would make known the word of God. That is something different from now and then bringing a ritual offering. That is why the priests also lived scattered throughout Israel, so that if there were questions, one could go, so to speak, to the priest round the corner to ask him how it is and what the word of God says, and so on.It was the intention that this people would preach the gospel to the other nations. That it will indeed do in the future, but we read that only at the end of chapter 11 in the epistle to the Romans.
There is, however, a problem, for...

Romans 3:3 (KJV)
For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?
Some from that Jewish people were unbelieving. This is an understatement. It may be so that some were unbelieving, but in fact the whole people was unbelieving. The Sanhedrin represented the Jewish people, and when the Sanhedrin speaks, the Jewish people officially speaks. Whether the majority of the Jewish people agreed with that has

nothing to do with it. It concerns a legal matter; when the government speaks, the Jewish people officially speaks.
The impression is created that only a minority of the Jews were unbelieving. That may well be so, but nevertheless that was officially the people.
In the first years after the resurrection of Christ there were many thousands of believers in Jerusalem. Perhaps that was a majority at that time. God, however, does not count democratically. What counts is that there is a government that officially represents that people. The Sanhedrin often said no to the Lord Jesus, to the gospel, and to those who preached the gospel. Thereby the Jewish people officially rejected salvation. Also the Jewish leaders in Rome said no. Also the king of the Jews said no. It was tried from all sides. The people officially said no, and now it is waiting for the future, when the Jewish people will yet officially say yes.
The point is that God committed the oracles of God to that Jewish people and that through that word the kingdom on earth would be established over all nations. Through faith in that word one can be saved. But if that word is committed to a people that is unbelieving, there is reason to fear that no one will ever hear of it and that thereby the work of God stands still. That is what some teach. A variant of that is that the church has taken the place of Israel. That is not entirely incorrect, but wrong conclusions are often drawn from it.
The question then is also: “Though some did not believe, how then must it continue? And, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” In other words, shall their unfaithfulness make God’s faithfulness of no effect? Israel was unfaithful to the word of God, and the question is whether God will then suddenly also be unfaithful to His word. If God cannot fulfil His promises through Israel, then He Himself would also be unfaithful and moreover unrighteous. If you do not keep to the agreement, then you are after all unrighteous, unfaithful, and therefore unbelieving
Faith is that one holds to His word. If God believes, then He is faithful to His own word, over against the Jews who are unfaithful to His word.
However that may be, God is faithful to His word and therefore does what He promised. Since the question is even asked here, it immediately implies the answer—namely that God is not unfaithful to His word. This means that He does a work in this present time that flows from the promises He made in the Old Testament.
God is not now doing a work through the Jews but outside them. He does His work either through the Jews or through the Gentiles. There are no other options. If He is not doing it through the Jews now, then He is doing it through the Gentiles. In practice that is the church—that is to say, the church. Seen in that light it is indeed true that the church takes the place of the Jewish people, but that place is the place of the royal priestly people. The intention is that in our days a people out of the Gentiles receives this word, believes it, and keeps it, but also preaches it. The word was not only spoken to us but also committed to us. That is why both Paul and Peter say that we are a royal and priestly people. We were Lo-ammi (not my people) but have become Ammi (my people). In practice it simply concerns the church, to whom the oracles of God in our days have been committed.

Is God therefore unfaithful?

Romans 3:4 (KJV)
God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.
God's work therefore does continue. What then did He promise? A Messianic kingdom, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the establishment of a New Covenant, the appearing of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, a new creation, and so on. Peter says about those promises in Acts 2 that they are unto you and to all that are afar off. Paul says that God promised them to our fathers, but to us, their children, He has fulfilled them, when He raised up Jesus from the dead. All those promises are fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. That it thereby concerns a hidden kingdom and a throne that until now stands only in heaven and also that those who form part of that kingdom are hidden with God is true. That does not stand here but in other Scripture passages. God keeps to His word. Only in chapters 9–11 does Paul go further into this.
It concerns the righteousness of God. That is directly connected with His faith, with His faithfulness. He keeps to the right. That right stands written, black on white. Thereby it was unchangeable and everyone could check it.
God is therefore righteous, for He keeps to His word.
For God is true and every man a liar; as it is written: That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged, quoted from Psalm 51.
God is true. For He keeps to the truth.
Every man is a liar and therefore does not keep to the truth. So you naturally come to him who did not abide in the truth and is the father of lies: the devil. The world holds down the truth in unrighteousness, while one should speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).
Psalm 51:4 (KJV)
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.
These are the words of the Lord Jesus. They are indeed the words of David, but he was a prophet and when he wrote these words he knew that they would be the words of his Son. Moreover, which man has sinned only against God and against no one else? Only that man whom God made to be sin for us (For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21).
Here the Son of man confesses the sin and sins of all humanity, of whom He is the Saviour. The Son of man is the Son of Adam. That Son of Adam came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). To this end He came into the world. As Head of the human family He had, according to legal and Jewish notions, as the Goel (redeemer) the right to pay the family's debt, to settle another's account. He took upon Himself the debt of the whole human family, in accordance with the law. Naturally it was by grace, by mercy and kindness, but that is not the point here. It was in accordance with the law. It was therefore righteous that He confessed our sins.
Why does He confess those sins to God? So that God might be justified in His speaking. How so? So that He might be clear when He judges. For God will judge, speak righteously. God spoke righteously and declared that you and I are free from any sin debt whatsoever. Humanly speaking that cannot be and is unrighteous, for we are guilty. The Judge should have condemned us. Why is there so much unrighteousness in the

world? Because the Judge has acquitted us. He has not executed us. He simply lets us live and we bring the unrighteousness into the world, while He lets it happen.
God speaks us free and does so on righteous grounds, for the Head of the family has paid the debt.
He who had no sin took our sins upon Himself and confesses those sins before God, so that God might righteously acquit. So that God might be justified in His judging.

Romans 3:4 (KJV)
God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.
God had promised to judge righteously and He does so. That righteous judgement means that we are without sins, for our debt has been paid. In accordance with the law our sins have received righteous recompense. We, however, have not personally borne the debt for those sins, but the Head of the family has done so. It was arranged in the law that this could and might be done.
His righteousness therefore does not come to expression because He projects it into the whole world and banishes unrighteousness from the world, but precisely in the opposite. The world is full of unrighteous people. God does nothing about that, for the simple reason that those unrighteous people have been acquitted by God. They are only dead and God wants nothing to do with them. One died for all, therefore all died (2 Corinthians 5:14).
He can hardly judge humanity, for they have already been judged. The only thing He could judge is their unbelief.
The ground on which we have been added to this people, to the church, is faith, after our sins were first taken away. The sins of the whole world have been taken away. Since then we have come to faith and entered into a new relationship with Him. One died for all, but that One does not live for all but only for those who believe.
God is righteous and acts righteously. We are thereby acquitted on righteous grounds.

Romans 3:5
But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)
Our unrighteousness commends God's righteousness. The unrighteousness of the natural man causes the righteousness of God to stand out all the more clearly. The less man holds to the Word of God, the more evident it becomes that God does hold to it.
The law came in so that sin might abound, and that through the law the sinful nature might be demonstrated, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Is that not terrible? No, for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. The contrast becomes all the clearer.
Speaking humanly, one might say that if the unrighteousness of man causes the righteousness of God to stand out, then it is being used for a good purpose. Paul does not deny that, but that is not the intention. The intention is that man should come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that God's present work may take shape in that man.
One should not abuse God's righteousness and grace in order to live in sin. That is possible, but Paul does not teach it, because that is not the purpose. It should be used positively, namely that God's work may be realised in us.

If God brings the wrath spoken of in Romans 1:18 upon us, is He then not unrighteous? For that unrighteousness of man only makes the righteousness of God stand out better, does it not? But that, says Paul, is human reasoning. Paul answers:

Romans 3:6
God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?
For how can God judge the world if He Himself is unrighteous? An unrighteous judge is in practice an impossibility.

Romans 3:7
For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?
Our lie has abounded to God's glory. If that is so, why should I still be judged as a sinner?

Romans 3:8
And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.
That is how we are slandered. People say that of us too. We do teach that God has taken away all our sins and that nothing can change that. But we do not teach that we should do evil so that good may come of it. We should walk in the good works which God has before ordained. That, however, is not the subject of this chapter. It is still about the righteousness of God. He is righteous and holds to His Word. He has condemned the sins of the world. He has let the world go, because the world holds the truth in unrighteousness. Moreover, One died for all, therefore all died, and God has nothing to do with the dead.
On the other hand, God is righteous, for He acquits us on the basis of the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
What is fundamentally set forth in verses 1–8 is developed more fully in the following section: namely, the unrighteousness of man over against the righteousness of God.

All Men Are Sinners

Romans 3:9–20
What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: Not among the Jews, and not among the Greeks either. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. If one is righteous, one is understanding; and if one is understanding and righteous, then one seeks God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

To go out of the way = to sin. Then you miss the mark and deviate. Then you are without, and thus sinful. Creation exists so that creation should serve and honour the Creator (see Romans 1:21). Where man is under sin and thus under the dominion of sin, that humanity has deviated and become unprofitable for use by God Himself. One cannot serve God.
To do good = to glorify and thank God. These are all quotations from the Old Testament.

Romans 3:13–14
Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
That is the same thing four times: throat, tongue, lips, mouth. These are the organs needed for speaking. When man does something, it is first of all speaking. What is in the heart comes out first through the mouth. Hands and feet have to do with man's actions and manner of life. Those are mentioned second.
The words that people speak are:

- Deceit. It concerns the lie, after all;
- Poison of asps = venom. This is obviously a reference to the serpent in the garden, who changed the Word of God into a lie;
- Cursing. Leads to death instead of to life. The deceit and lie of Satan also lead to death. He says it leads to life, but the truth is that one dies of it.
- Bitterness. This also has to do with death. If water is bitter, it means it is poisonous. It has become undrinkable. Without water there is no life (water is a picture of the Word of God).

Romans 3:15
Their feet are swift to shed blood:
That too is death. Not that blood is death, but when it is shed and thus wasted, it has to do with the working of death.

Romans 3:16
Destruction and misery are in their ways:
Ways corresponds to feet, to man's manner of life.

Romans 3:17
And the way of peace have they not known.
In this passage the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life are in fact implied. The poison of asps refers to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree represents religion and law. The Old Covenant of the law is also a ministration of death. Over against it stands the tree of life, which is a picture of the New Covenant. The New Covenant is characterised by grace and peace, just as religion is characterised by strife.

If there were no religion, there would be far fewer wars. Peace is characteristic of faith. That is why the New Covenant is also called the covenant of peace—even already in the Old Testament. He is our peace, who hath made both one (Ephesians 2:14). The Jews, coming from the Old Covenant and living under the law, greet one another with the word "shalom," peace. In reality they wish one another the New Covenant.
Here it says they have not known the way of peace. They do not come to faith. When one believes, one has peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1–2). That is the order: peace with God, and therefore we have access to this grace.
The world, led by the Jews, has not known the way of peace. Even where they say, "It is peace," there is no peace. They cry peace, but there is no peace.
The great irony is that for at least decades people have been trying to achieve peace for the Jewish state, but they cannot bring it about. If they do succeed and the Jews say there is peace and no danger, then sudden destruction will come upon them (1 Thessalonians 5:3).
They have not known the way of peace. Why not?

Romans 3:18
There is no fear of God before their eyes.
The fear of God = submission to God. What one fears, one submits to. Being subject to, taking account of.
People devise all sorts of things and philosophise about all sorts of things, but it only brings strife. Yet one should submit to what God has devised, to His plan of the ages, to His Word, and thus fear Him. Then one has peace.

Romans 3:19
Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
Note "under sin" in verse 9, applied to Jew and Gentile, and then "under the law," applied only to the Jews. In both cases it concerns dominion. One is subject to sin, which one serves (see chapter 6), or one is subject to the law.
By the law is the knowledge of sin. That is knowledge of the sinful nature. The law does not aim to improve man; it only appears to do so. The law says: "Do this and do that, or rather do not." Man thinks he improves by it. The point is precisely that God gave the law to demonstrate that it does not work, because man is incorrigible. How do we know that? By the law. Impose a law on man, tell him what to do and not to do. Then it will become clear that he wills, but cannot. He can consent with his mind to the law of God, but in practice he does not know what to do with it with hands and feet (see chapter 7). Man cannot, and the law demonstrates that.
Where man lives under a law, he assumes that man is essentially good. If man is not good, then he cannot improve the good that is in him by the law either. People draw the wrong conclusion.
What has the law brought the Jews? Precisely unbelief. They boast in the law. The law stood and stands in their way of coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because they do not believe that one must be born again. If one is essentially good, then it only needs to be developed. The point is precisely that there is nothing good in man;

therefore the old man must be done away with, and a new man must take his place. That is one of the main reasons why religious people generally do not come to faith. Why then does the law speak? To make clear that the whole world, including the Jews, is guilty before God.

Romans 3:20
Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
By the law there is no justification, but knowledge of sin. Not knowledge of sins (the acts), but knowledge of the sinful nature. Where do you know your misery? From the law of God. Exactly. You gain little from knowing your sin; you are better off knowing the Lord and the power of His resurrection. In the best case, through the law one only comes to know that one is no good, but unfortunately most do not get that far, because those living under the dominion of the law are usually too Pharisaic for that.
This section therefore speaks of the unrighteousness of man, without distinction. The following section speaks of the righteousness of God. That is a double contrast: unrighteousness over against righteousness, and man over against God.

Justification by Faith

Romans 3:21–31
But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;
Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:
For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.
Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:
Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.
Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Romans 3:21
But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:
“But now” = after. After all that has gone before. Since the death and resurrection of Christ, the righteousness of God has been manifested without the law. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, apart from the law.

The law and the prophets = the Old Testament. That bears witness to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and thus to the righteousness of God. It was announced in it, but now it has happened and been revealed. Was it hidden in the past? Yes, for it lies hidden in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the Old Testament speaks of it.
The law and the prophets are a forerunner of a better hope and a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 7:19; 10:1).
The law and the prophets spoke of it, but do not contribute to it.

Romans 3:22
Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:
The faith of Jesus Christ should be set alongside the faith of God from verse 3. It is still about the same thing. God holds to His Word, and the One of whom the gospel speaks held and still holds to the Word of God. Indeed, He is the Word of God. So much does He hold to it. The chief characteristic of Him is that He holds to the Word of God. First in what He speaks, but also in His manner of life. As many promises of God as there are, whatever God has promised, they are in Him yea and amen.
The righteousness of God has therefore been manifested through the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of His faithfulness and also of His obedience. He learned obedience (faithfulness) by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8).
Obedience = the inclination to hearken to the Word.
Faith, obedience, and faithfulness are synonyms.
The faith of Jesus Christ is mentioned in the following passages:

- Romans 3:26: He justifies those who are of the faith of Jesus;
- Galatians 2:16: Through His faithfulness and submission to the Word of God we have been saved;
- Galatians 2:20: He does a work upon us and in us, at the command of His heavenly Father. We live from that. We are sheep of His flock, and He is the good Shepherd. He cares for us because He is faithful to Him who appointed Him Shepherd;
- Ephesians 3:12: Through the faith of Him we have boldness and access with confidence. That is the summary of the epistle to the Hebrews. We should come with boldness through the obedience of Christ.
- Philippians 3:9: A righteousness which is through the faith of Christ. The faith of the Lord Jesus Christ is the source, the cause, of our salvation. We do indeed have part in salvation through our faith, but there would be no salvation without the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. If He had not walked the way in submission to the will of His heavenly Father, there would have been no salvation, our sins would not have been taken away, there would have been no new creation, no eternal life or New Covenant, and we should not have been saved. If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins.

The same thought is also expressed in the term “out of faith.”
Out of = on the ground of…When it says we are justified out of faith, it concerns the faith of Jesus Christ.
Romans 1:17
For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith…That is out of the

faith of Jesus Christ, unto our faith. Out of faith (the source), unto faith (the destination). The faith of the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of our salvation. We have part in it because we too believe and are thus followers of Christ. We believe as He did and have part in His salvation.
The righteousness of God is established through the faith—the faithfulness—of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we receive a part in it through faith.
It is not so much a matter of our being justified by faith, but rather that God is righteous in that He has acquitted us. The Lord Jesus Christ has done away with sins in the flesh (Romans 8), and when God acquits us, He is righteous in doing so. That is why John can say that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Normally speaking, the forgiveness of sins is not righteous but unrighteous, because sins must be recompensed. Sins bring guilt that must be paid. If sins are nevertheless forgiven, that would be unrighteous—unless... Man could not think of that himself, but God has revealed it to man. Unless that sin debt has been paid. That has been done by the Lord Jesus, who remained faithful to the word of God and thereby laid the righteous foundation for our justification. When God forgives us, He does not act contrary to the law. He does not merely overlook it, but justifies us through the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God set forth to be a propitiation (see verse 25).We see the righteousness of God demonstrated in the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When God does not impute sins to man, He is still righteous, for He has indeed imputed those sins—but He imputed them to the lawful Representative of all humanity, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, who as the Son of man is the lawful Representative of humanity before God. The recompense for sins took place in full accordance with the righteousness of God as demonstrated in the law. Thus the righteousness of God has been revealed unto all and upon all who believe in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That work sprang from His faith, His faithfulness, His obedience.
Verses 21 and 22 connect directly with Romans 1:16–17 (KJV). What stands in between is, so to speak, a parenthetical clause.
God does not impute sins and acquits those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Man's salvation does not rest in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, but in His resurrection. The great Christian symbol should not be a cross but bread and cup. God has given His risen Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Romans 3:23-24
For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:All who believe are justified freely by His grace instead of by their own works.The redemption is in Christ Jesus. Outside Him there is no redemption. It exists only in Him. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Only when you have a part in Him, only when you are born again and have a part in the resurrection life of Christ, are you in Christ and have a part in the redeeming work of Christ. Then we are baptised into Christ and are dead, buried, and risen with Him.
How can one be acquitted of sins? How is that possible? It is possible because Christ bore the debt. The wages of sin is death. Thereafter He also received a part in the other promises of God—namely that the believer would be born of God. The believer's faith is reckoned to him for righteousness. That was already promised in Genesis 15. The Lord Jesus was the first to receive a part in that. He bore our sins and therefore had to die,

but He was a Believer and for that reason received everlasting life. He died for sin and thereafter received everlasting life on the ground of faith. Since then that way of salvation has been available to everyone. We are already dead; now only believe. Then you receive a part in that everlasting life that the Lord Jesus Christ received. Then we are in Him, just as we were by nature in Adam.

Romans 3:25 (KJV)
Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
We have a part in the redeeming work of Christ because God set Him forth to be a propitiation.
It stands: God has set Christ forth to be a propitiation = hilastērion.
The word propitiation is not the usual word for reconciliation. We encounter this word only once more, in Hebrews 9:5 (KJV), where it is translated as mercy seat. In the Old Testament the same happens with the word kappōret = mercy seat, derived from kāphar = atonement.
The mercy seat is a covering. Propitiation therefore means covering. Not in the sense of temporary covering, but in the sense of burying, definitively putting away.
Blessed is the man whose sins are covered, whose sins are put away.
Mercy seat is therefore actually a double translation: propitiation and covering.
This word in Romans 3:25 therefore refers to all the ordinances on the Day of Atonement, for on that day the blood of bulls and goats was brought once a year into the holy of holies, onto the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. According to Hebrews 9 the high priest's entering on the Day of Atonement with the blood of bulls and goats is a picture of the once-for-all entering of the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec into the true sanctuary—namely heaven—where He entered by His own blood. That blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat, the throne of grace.
The Day of Atonement is therefore a picture of the resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ.
When He entered heaven by the true blood, He did not go into heaven with a bucket of blood, but by His resurrection, His life.
By His blood—namely by the power of an endless life. He first rose from the dead and then ascended to His Father. Blood = life.
God has therefore set Christ forth as the mercy seat, as propitiation, as the ark of the covenant. Precisely the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (hilastērion) is a picture of the heavenly position of Christ in glory. That mercy seat was made of one piece of gold (eternity). From the corners of that mercy seat the cherubim of glory were beaten out, fashioned. They are a picture of the glory of Christ. He is that mercy seat.
The mercy seat belongs to the ark. In it is the word of God. Thus the whole ark is a picture of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of God is in Him. That is His faith.
What therefore actually stands is that God has set Him at His right hand in heaven, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Through Him the way into heaven has been opened, so that we may enter with boldness to the throne of grace by a new and living way that He has consecrated for us through the veil—that is, through His flesh. All that is contained in that one word.
God has given Him there at His right hand to us, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. This is the heart of the gospel.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. Whoever looked upon that lifted-up serpent would be healed. He would be delivered from those serpent bites here on earth. What in John 3:14 is called the Son of man is called in verse 16 the only begotten Son of God, for God has exalted Him and appointed Him Son. The lifting up of the serpent is not a picture of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus—for that is His humiliation—but of His exaltation. Whoever believes in this exalted Christ receives everlasting life.

Romans 3:25-26

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

God set Him forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. Blood is life. Christ entered the sanctuary by His own blood, by His own life. Not by His death, but by His life.

That blood was sprinkled by the High Priest from the altar, along the whole route into the holy place, right into the holy of holies, after which it was finally sprinkled on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. Thus there arose a bloody—that is, a living—way that leads right into heaven itself. That is why Hebrews 10 says that we should enter by a new and living way that He has consecrated for us through the veil, by faith in His blood. By the faith that God raised Him from the dead.

The cross has been. That was also important, for there the Lamb of God bore away the sins of the world. But you are not saved by that. It concerns that God then raised Him from the dead, and then the principalities and powers were openly displayed, and God triumphed over them in Christ. Then life and incorruption were brought to light. We have received a part in that blood because we have placed our trust in the Lord.

The question now is why God set Christ forth as a propitiation. Otherwise put: why was all that necessary—that the Lord Jesus suffered and died for our sins and was then raised and set in heaven? The popular answer is that it was necessary for our sins, but that answer is insufficient. Here it stands that it was necessary for a demonstration of His righteousness. God wanted to forgive us our sins, but if the judge overlooks sins, he is unrighteous. Many see God as a God of love and therefore also as unrighteous. For, so the reasoning goes, if we do our best and live as well as possible here, it will all turn out well. In that case He would not impute our sins to us, and according to the law that is unrighteous, for the soul that sins shall surely die. Sins would therefore receive righteous recompense. God does want to forgive us those sins, but that cannot just happen unless there is a righteous, legal ground for it. That legal ground exists in this reconciling work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who took the debt upon Himself in our place and was condemned for it, but on the ground of faith brought new life into being. That work was not necessary for our sins, but for God’s righteousness.

Thus the righteousness of God is demonstrated in the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:26

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Verses 25 and 26 are parallel sentences. Twice it says it is to declare His righteousness. That is to emphasise it.
The first sentence says: to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. That has to do with the putting away of the sins committed in the first 4000 years of history, from Adam to Christ. On the ground of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, all those sins from previous ages have been forgiven retrospectively. Those sins were committed under the forbearance of God. God bore with them and did not immediately intervene.
The second sentence says: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
Here it is to declare God's righteousness in this present time. In Old Testament times one had to believe that the Son of man would in the future take away the sins of the world. For us it applies that we should believe that God has done this in the past. We have historical proof that these things happened in the past. The work accomplished by the Lord Jesus has an effect on the past and thereafter also on the future. Thus once for all. The Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times for your sakes (1 Peter 1:20). Therefore He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament… (Hebrews 9:15). The sins committed under the Old Testament have been atoned for. It is once for all, with retroactive and prospective effect.
It is still about the righteousness of God. That has been declared. God is not only a loving God, but thank God also a righteous God. What use is a loving judge? You can talk him round. Just act a bit pitiful and it will be all right. Yes indeed, God is love, rich in mercy and kindness. Precisely for that reason He has arranged, doing righteously, that He can forgive our sins. Therefore, who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? No one, for God's action is fully in accordance with the law (Romans 8:33).
With what purpose did He do it? That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. That God might be just in justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ and thus pronouncing him free. If that redeeming work of Christ had not taken place and God wished to pronounce the believer free, then He would have to tamper with the law, and that would have made Him unrighteous. God is indeed a loving God, but He is also Judge. He holds to what is right. What is the point if He justifies us and thereby becomes unrighteous Himself? Then our so-called righteousness would mean nothing. Who determined that? Someone who is Himself unrighteous? That gets us nowhere. He is righteous, even when He justifies an unrighteous person who believes.

Romans 3:27
Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.
In what can we boast as children of God? In nothing, for we have done nothing to deserve it. We have not become children of God on the ground of our works, but by grace, on the ground of the work of the Lord Jesus.
If you want to know what God thinks of sin, look at the cross of Golgotha. Away with the sins, away with the sinner, whoever he may be.
We do not trust in a loving God who can be talked round, who can be appealed to on His emotions—no, we trust in a God who is righteous. Thank God, there is justice

somewhere, and on the ground of that justice God pronounces you and me free. Where is boasting then? Christ is our boast.
The law of faith = that God counts faith for righteousness.
Believing is indeed a verb, but it is not a work. Believing is the opposite of working. Believing is trusting in the work of another.

Romans 3:28
Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
"Conclude" = to reach a conclusion. It is the end of the matter, the conclusion. It is not merely a deduction, but the final deduction. Then it is finished. It is the sum of the matter.
Conclusion contains the word "close" or "lock."
The conclusion is that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, for everything is settled in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:29–30
Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:
Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.
The Jews have the law, the Gentiles do not. Is God then only the God of the Jews? There is but one God. That is the God who made heaven and earth. He is therefore also God of the Gentiles. How so?

Romans 3:30
Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.
Since there is one God, He is God of the Jews and of the Gentiles. There are not three thrones in heaven, but one. Nowhere in the Bible does it say we have a triune God. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD (Deuteronomy 6:4). That is the creed of the Jews. Not that of Christians, for they confess three Gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
He will justify the circumcision (the Jews) by faith, and the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) also.
The Jews by faith, and the Gentiles through faith. That is no difference. Whether it is called by faith or through faith makes no difference at all. Whether it is by the faith of Jesus Christ or through the faith of Jesus Christ makes really no difference whatsoever. Faith is the way by which one is justified. God counts faith for righteousness. Whether one is circumcised or not has nothing to do with it. It is not about the outward, but about the inward. It is not about whose descendants we are, or what physical mutilation we bear (to put it oddly), but about what is in the heart. Do we believe the Word of God? Well, God counts faith for righteousness. That is not new; it has always been so.

Romans 3:31
Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.
Justification by faith is not contrary to the law, but in accordance with the law, for the law provides that the head of the family, the Goel, the kinsman-redeemer, pays the family's debt.

After Romans 3 one can in fact continue reading in Romans 5. That is the normal progression of the argument, for in chapter 3 it is established that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (verse 28).
Romans 5:1
Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
If you read that straight through, you hardly notice that a whole chapter is missing. Romans 4 is a digression on what has already been set forth, raising the question of how it was with Abraham in Old Testament times. Abraham is, after all, the example for all believers and moreover the father of the whole of Israel. Abraham too was justified by faith and not by the works of the law (see also Galatians 2 and 3). Abraham did not even live under the law, for that came 430 years later. The law therefore has nothing whatever to do with it. It is even said that before this salvation and this life could be manifested, the law first had to be brought to an end, because in fact the Old Covenant stood in the way of certain things.
Romans 4 therefore discusses Abraham as the example for all believers, just as Galatians 3 does.

Chapter 4
Abraham Justified by Faith

Romans 4:1–2
What shall we then say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.
If Abraham was justified by works, if those works of his were good enough, then that is quite an achievement. Then he would indeed have something to boast about, but not before God. In Romans 9 it is said of the Jewish people that they have a zeal of God. That seems impressive, but Paul immediately adds: “but not according to knowledge.” So it is with Abraham too. He may perhaps have glory among men, but before God it means nothing. How then was it with Abraham? Was he justified by the works of the law? No, for what does Genesis 15:6 say?

Romans 4:3
For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
The same statement is quoted in Galatians 3:6 and also in James 2:23. That is a controversial chapter, because according to James it is indeed about works. But that is not the case. In James the question is asked: How do we know that Abraham believed God? Then James says: “By the works that he did.”
This statement is therefore quoted three times in the New Testament: twice in the great doctrinal epistles of the New Testament, Romans and Galatians, and once more in the great practical epistle, James.
Now follows an explanation.

Romans 4:4
Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

To him that works, the reward is not reckoned as grace, but as debt. Someone who works ought to receive wages for it. The one for whom the work is done then has a debt. He owes the worker his wages. If someone works and receives his wages, that is not grace.
To work = to do something in order to receive wages for it.
When we are taught that we cannot be saved by working, that does not mean we should henceforth do nothing. The whole idea is that we would indeed work, but receive no wages for it.
If you work, then according to biblical standards you ought to receive wages for it—not as grace, but because your employer then owes you a debt. The labourer is worthy of his hire.
If it is true that we are saved by grace, then logically it is not by works.

Romans 4:5
But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.
Although "to believe" is grammatically a verb (it can be conjugated, after all), it is still not a "work." Believing means placing trust in what someone else says, or believing in what someone else says they have done. In practice, therefore, someone else has done the work.
We believe in God who has acquitted us. We do not set to work to bring about or earn that acquittal; we simply believe what God has said—and He has said that He acquits the ungodly, the sinner. That has already happened. For Christ was set forth in the past as a propitiation (Romans 3:24–25. There is therefore nothing left to accomplish; God has acquitted the sinner out of His grace.
Faith is counted for righteousness. That is the explanation of the statement in Genesis 15:6: "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." So it has always been. Some claim that in Old Testament times people had to be saved in a different way from New Testament times. Not so; what has changed is that the past looked forward to what would happen in the future, and in the present we look back to what was already accomplished in the past.
There is, however, a difference between Old Testament and New Testament believers, for under the Old Testament no one received eternal life, because it did not yet exist. Eternal life could only be given after it was first given to the Lord Jesus at His resurrection from the dead. Through Him it is given to everyone who believes. That is why we are still the firstfruits of a new creation and of a New Covenant, even though there were, of course, believers long before us in Old Testament times.
Nevertheless we are firstfruits, because they have not yet received that eternal life, but we have. That is why the church is a church of firstfruits, with the corresponding birthright, heavenly position, and inheritance. That is the well-known reversal: that many who are first shall be last, and many who are last shall be first.
Was Abraham a believer? Yes. Was he born again? No—but he could do nothing about that, just as we can do nothing about the fact that we are born again. We believe, and God regenerates us. God has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Christ. God has begotten us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits. We came somewhat late, yet we are first, because we are the first to have received eternal life. That difference does indeed exist, and it immediately shows the

special position believers have held since the resurrection of Christ—though hardly anyone seems to know it nowadays.
God acquitted believers in the past, and He does so now in the present. He does not impute their sins to them. Abraham is set forth as an example. Just as he believed and was accounted righteous, so it is for every believer. Noah too is said to have been a righteous man. That seems inconsistent, because the Bible says there is none righteous. Noah was not righteous either, but God accounted him righteous. That must mean Noah was a believing man. The Bible says as much, at any rate in Hebrews 11.
Romans 4 now mentions another example. That is how Paul always proceeds when he explains something from the Old Testament. He always takes at least two passages from the Old Testament, places them side by side, and says they teach the same thing. Here he first cites Genesis 15:6, and now he quotes Psalm 32, where David is cited. That takes us about 1000 years further on.

Romans 4:6–8
Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,
Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.
If God does not impute sin, what does He impute?
Righteousness. David says the same. God accounts the man righteous because the sins of the man have been imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ.
Man did not and does not need the law to be saved. He cannot earn that salvation at all. Moreover he cannot meet the law's demands, for it is a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. In Galatians 3 the law is even called a curse. From that we have been delivered.
Verses 4–8 should really be placed in parentheses, for Paul now picks up the thread from verse 3 again. That is the main line.

Romans 4:9
Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.
Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Does this blessedness come upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? The underlying thought is still whether this blessedness applies only to the Jews, or also to the Gentiles.

Romans 4:10
How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.
How was it reckoned to him? Was he circumcised or uncircumcised at the time? He was not yet circumcised. That happened much later. By Jewish standards—which did not yet exist in Abraham's days (Judah was, after all, Abraham's great-grandson)—Abraham was therefore a Gentile. The law came only 430 years after Abraham and about 2500 years after Adam, and when God gave the law it was only to that slave people from Egypt. The rest of the world has therefore always had to do without law. Moreover Israel, to whom the law was given, in practice paid no attention to the law,

whereupon God said they therefore did not belong in the land of Canaan either. Only a very few have ever lived under the law.
When God brought that law to an end, Gentiles came to faith who had never lived under the law, and they allow themselves to be persuaded by a philosophy that they must now suddenly live under the law.
Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness. On the ground that he was circumcised? No. On the ground that he lived under the law and tried to keep it? No, not that either, for that law did not even exist yet. Abraham was simply a Gentile.

Romans 4:11–12
And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.
He would be a father also to all who are circumcised—but only to those who also walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham. Circumcision alone is not enough. One must also follow the faith of father Abraham and thus believe as Abraham did. Only then is Abraham your father.
The Jews appealed to the fact that they had Abraham as their father (John 8 from verse 30 onwards). The Lord Jesus says He knows that the Jews are Abraham's biological descendants, yet they seek to kill Him. In short, they do not walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," namely tread in the footsteps of his faith.
In what follows the Lord Jesus says this quite bluntly to them: they are children of the devil. They were indeed Abraham's children on biological grounds, but not his heirs. Abraham had other sons from whom descendants came, but none of them were his heirs. You may descend from him, but that does not yet make you his heir. For that you must also walk in his steps, follow his faith.
We Gentiles walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, and on that ground we are justified just as Abraham was, without circumcision. What then of someone who is circumcised? The same. It makes no difference. Only when you have come to faith in God who spoke, and thus to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, only then are you a child of Abraham. If you are unbelieving but circumcised, then your circumcision is reckoned as uncircumcision. Jews are not automatically saved because they have a good pedigree. That is utter foolishness. They should be followers of an uncircumcised Abraham. The Jews should therefore take example from a Gentile. Peter said: "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15:11).

Romans 4:13
For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.
That could not be otherwise, for the law came only 430 years later.The promise made to Abraham included that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. That is called in Galatians 3 the gospel which was preached before unto Abraham. That promise is in fact the promise of a New Covenant. The New Covenant came only with

the coming of the Messiah. There is a whole series of things promised to Abraham, but taken together they are one and the same thing.
What was promised:

- The coming of the Messiah;
- Man in the image and likeness of God;
- The coming of Adam—or rather the Son of Adam;
- The seed of Abram, which is Christ;
- A High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110);
- The Son of David, the Seed of David (2 Samuel 7);
- The coming of the Holy Ghost (Joel 2; Zechariah 10; Isaiah 12);
- The coming of a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31);
- The coming of a new creation (Isaiah 65–66);
- The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would bring life and incorruptibility to light;
- That believers would be called children of God (1 John 3:1);
- "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." But meanwhile we are that.

That promise was not made to Abraham or his seed through the law, for the law came only 430 years later.
Abraham would inherit the world. The longest-living inherits. If Abraham and his seed were to inherit the world, that means Abraham and his seed would remain even when the world as such has passed away.
That promise was not made to Abraham through the law, but through the righteousness of faith—not on the ground of the works of the law, but on the ground of faith.

Romans 4:14
For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:
If the inheritance were through the law, then faith would have been made void, for then you would need no faith at all. And since it was a promise made through the righteousness of faith, that promise would have been made of none effect if it could have been brought about through the works of the law. As long as the law existed, the promise to Abraham could not be fulfilled. The law stood in the way of it. By the death of the Lord Jesus the law was done away. Thus the promise could afterwards still be fulfilled. And so it was, for the Lord rose from the dead and then the New Covenant came in. Then there was the Messiah, then there was everlasting life, then incorruptibility was brought to light, and so on.

Romans 4:15
Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.
Where there is law, there is transgression of the law, and where there is transgression of the law, there is necessarily wrath. The law does not bring about anything positive, but something negative—not acquittal, but condemnation. The law causes sins to increase rather than decrease. There is no righteousness by the law. By human standards perhaps, but by God's standards absolutely not. The law works wrath.

Romans 4:16
Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,
“It” = the promise from verse 13. One has not served for it, not worked for it, yet one receives it, and therefore it is grace. The advantage of that is that the promise is thereby made sure at once. If it were by works, it would be highly doubtful whether it would be attained. You would still have to wait and see whether those works were sufficient. Even if you had kept the law perfectly up to today and still had at least one day left, much could still go wrong. You would therefore never know whether you would be saved or not. Since you simply cannot keep the law, the promise to Abraham would have been nonsense if righteousness were by the law and not by faith. You simply can never meet the conditions. Therefore the promise to Abraham was unconditional. This is what God promised, and that is that. Therefore it is sure, and therefore the Word of God is certain, therefore we have certainty of our salvation, therefore Paul can repeatedly say: “We know… we know… we know…,” simply because it is a certainty.
“All the seed” = all the sons of Abraham.
In the Old Testament there are plenty of examples of people who did not keep the law, yet were believers. David committed many crimes, including very serious ones. Nevertheless he was a man after God’s own heart. Because he believed. So it is with us too. We too are no good. Nevertheless we believe, and therefore we are sure of our salvation. To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. In that all these things are settled. That is why Abraham is also the father of all who believe—of believers from the Gentiles and believers from the Jews.
Now Paul goes on to explain the expression “father of us all,” for that is a play on the name Abraham.

Romans 4:17
(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were;
Abraham = father (ab) of many nations (am). Thus his name is explained in the Old Testament: “I have made thee a father of many nations” (Genesis 17:5). It is the complement to “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Not all families of the earth are yet fully blessed. We have not yet come that far. The history of salvation is far from ended. We believe the Lord Jesus will return in the foreseeable future, but not that the world will then perish, for God is not yet finished with His plan of salvation. When the 1000 years begin, the earth will be populated only by believing people. Before that happens, necessarily only a part of mankind has come to faith and another part has not. In those days we live. In other words, in our days God has begun to fulfil His promises. He has been doing so since the resurrection of Christ up to the present day.
That all families of the earth will be blessed does indeed apply in our days, but it is not yet complete. We are the firstfruits from all those families who have come and will come to faith. Only in the future will it be completed.
Abraham is a father of many nations. Insofar as that is literal, it is so, because there will literally be believing nations.

This was an interposed clause. The main sentence is: who is the father of us all before Him whom he believed… namely God. Abraham is father of us all before God. He is father of all believers to the glory of God. He received that position from God.
Abraham believed God. But what exactly did he believe? He believed in resurrection. At any rate he believed in the resurrection of the Firstfruits, namely of his Seed, which is Christ. He therefore believed in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ—not afterwards, but beforehand. He believed that this would happen in the future.
At any rate it does not say he believed that the Lord Jesus would die for his sins. Perhaps he did believe that, but that is not the point. He believed in a living Christ, just as we do. He believed in God who quickeneth the dead. Not who makes alive, but who makes alive those who once died. He believed in a God who makes the dead alive again.
Abraham also believed that God calleth those things which be not as though they were. As though they still were. When the Lord Jesus says, "Lazarus, come forth," He says it to a dead man, but He acts as though Lazarus still was. God calls the things which are not (any longer) as though they were. For He makes the dead alive.

Romans 4:18
Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.
Abraham believed against all expectation that he would become the father of many nations. Those things also had a direct application to his own person. He believed that against all expectation. He was already so old that he could no longer have children. Moreover Sarah was also so old that she could no longer bear children. Yet Abraham believed it was possible, for it had been said to him: "So shall thy seed be." That is in Genesis 15:5. In the next verse it says that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. What did he believe? That God quickeneth the dead. The first dead person to be made alive would be Abraham himself. For he could no longer have children.

Romans 4:19
And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:
He did not consider his own body already dead. Abraham was 99 years old when God said this to him. He fell on his face laughing. That was humour indeed! They both laughed—Abraham and Sarah. They laughed quite heartily. That laughing was an expression of their faith. When that son was finally born, they named him accordingly: Isaac = the LORD hath made me to laugh. In plain English: "The LORD hath made me laugh." It was therefore certainly no sin, or you would not name your child that. Moreover, Isaac is the seed of Abraham and thus in the first place a type of Christ, who is therefore also so named. It concerns joy. That of the New Covenant, of life out of death.
Abraham also did not consider that the deadness of Sarah's womb had come. He was not anxious about that, for God had promised they would have a son.

Romans 4:20
He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

Contrary to what is commonly taught, Abraham did not doubt at all. Doubt is not characteristic of faith, but of unbelief. If Abraham had doubted, he would have been unbelieving, and thus his unbelief would not have been counted unto him for righteousness.
He was strengthened in faith and gave glory to God. When they had a child at such an advanced age, that was not a fine achievement of Abraham and Sarah, but he gave God the glory. They themselves had achieved nothing, for that was quite impossible. The glory belonged to God, who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
One may wonder why it took so long before Abraham and Sarah had a child. Well, so that God would get the glory. By human standards it was impossible. It was the power of God working in them. Paul later says too that it is God's purpose that we should be weak, for only then can the power of God work in us. Paul says in the second epistle to the Corinthians to them: "You think me a weakling who can do nothing, a little man who is rather arrogant but otherwise amounts to nothing. Well, that is so, but look around you to see what my ministry has nevertheless accomplished. You as believers would not even exist were it not that I preached the gospel in Corinth and laid the foundation. How can that be if I am weak? That is the power of God working in me, and therefore I will glory in my weakness, for when I am weak, then am I strong." Why were all those important women in the Old Testament who were expected to bear children always barren? So that God would get the glory. Why can this old world bring forth nothing good? So that God would get the glory.
Giving glory to God. Abraham's whole position was to the glory of God. He became a father of all believers before God. Birth from a barren man and woman is of course resurrection from the dead. That is why the birth of the Lord Jesus from the virgin—who could not bring forth because she knew no man—was beforehand a picture of His resurrection. That they wrapped Him in swaddling clothes was beforehand a picture that He would be wrapped in linen cloths and laid in the grave. When the Lord rose, they found those same cloths in His grave. Linen cloths, as a picture of the priesthood He would hold after His resurrection. And thus after His birth from the virgin—which you may regard as a resurrection—He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. On the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed He rose from the table, laid aside His garments, and girded Himself with a linen cloth: resurrection and appointment to High Priest. That is already pictured at His birth.
Abraham therefore believed in that God, and the promise was fulfilled as a foreshadowing of what would later happen. When God promises Abraham seed, Isaac indeed appears, as by a miracle of God, but that is a picture of the coming of the definitive Seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ—not at His birth in Bethlehem, but at His birth from the dead. That is why Isaac was born in this way, so to speak as raised from the dead. The Seed of Abraham, which is Christ—not Isaac. Isaac is only a picture of that.

Romans 4:21
And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
God had promised, and Abraham was fully persuaded that God would also fulfil that promise. That He was able to do it and therefore would do it. Abraham believed in what God would do, and we believe in large measure in what God has already done, but some

believers do not believe that God can raise the dead. For us it should be even easier than for Abraham to believe that God is able to do what He has promised. For He has already fulfilled many promises. For us it should therefore be easier to believe. But we also believe that He will do what He has promised for the future.

Romans 4:22
And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.
Abraham believed in all simplicity that God would do what He had promised. Therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness. He had placed his full trust in the Lord. He had the faith of a child. A human being can believe very easily. That is also the first thing he does. A child even believes that Father Christmas exists and that Black Peter comes down the chimney to put sweets in the shoe. Why does a child believe that? Simply because his parents have told him so. A child naturally trusts what is said. It is not that difficult. It is the pride of man that brings him to unbelief. By nature a human being believes. Unbelief is therefore called contradicting. You would not do that. Has God said that? Well, then that is so. God has spoken and has done what He always announced beforehand. Faith in that is counted for righteousness. That was so then, and it stands black on white in Genesis 15.

Romans 4:23
Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;
It was not written only for his sake that it was imputed to him. It was therefore written for his sake, but not only for him. If it was written for his sake, then it must have been written while he was still alive, for otherwise he himself would have gained nothing from it. That statement was therefore not written later by Moses, or still later in the exile. Moreover, it would have had no meaning if those words had not been inspired by God. In other words, Abraham must have known the account and must also have known that it was inspired by God. It was therefore a testimony from God Himself. Genesis was written in the days when those people were still alive. Those people were prophets and were inspired by God. You read over it easily, but here it stands.
It was not written only for his sake, for all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Corinthians 10:11). That applies not only to Genesis 15:6, but to the whole Old Testament. That is why these things are in Genesis also for us. If it is true that Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness, that means God also in our days counts faith for righteousness. Faith in Him who spoke and who can make the dead alive.

Romans 4:24
But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;
It was also written for us. For whom? For those to whom righteousness shall be imputed by faith. Namely those who believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. What then must a man believe to be saved? That God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. That is putting it very briefly, but this is the essence. Whoever does not believe this should read 1 Corinthians 15. For the gospel is that God raiseth the dead.

Chapter 5
Reconciliation with God and Peace through Faith
You could in fact read chapter 5 straight after chapter 3. Chapter 3 is about being justified by the faith of Jesus, without the deeds of the law (verse 28). Chapter 5 then continues: Therefore being justified by faith… Chapter 4 is an explanation of that justification by faith, using the example of Abraham, whose faith was counted to him for righteousness. So it has always been. And in Galatians 3 and 4 it is shown that the New Covenant is the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham.
Chapter 4 ends where chapter 3 ended: that the Lord Jesus was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Our righteousness is settled in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 3:21–22 connects back to Romans 1:16–17, and Romans 5:1 connects to that in turn. The main thread therefore runs:
Romans 1:16–17
For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
Romans 3:21–22
But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;
Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Romans 5:1
Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
The gospel reveals the righteousness of God, which is there by the faith of Jesus Christ. Therefore being justified by faith… Whose faith? The faith of Jesus Christ. Although it is not explicitly stated in Romans 5:1, it is in Romans 1 and 3. So there is very little difference.
“Through our Lord Jesus Christ” is linked to “peace with God,” but it could just as well be linked to “being justified by faith.” This does not mean our faith does not matter, but our faith would be meaningless if He had not been faithful. By His faith He ran the race and is now seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 12:2). By our faith we have part in what was accomplished by His faith. It is out of the faith of Jesus Christ and unto our faith.
“Therefore” = on the ground of what has gone before.
“Being justified” = being declared righteous, acquitted. God has justified us and acquitted us of every guilt. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7).
We have peace with God. He has acquitted us, so nothing stands between Him and us any longer.
Peace = two parties were at odds, but have been reconciled. Peace goes back to fri = free.
According to Ephesians 2:14, peace especially means that the two have been made one: “For he is our peace, who hath made both one…”

Peace does not only mean that two parties have become one, but is also one of the marks of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant is that of the law, so the New Covenant is logically that of grace. They stand opposite one another, but the more obvious expression for the New Covenant is that of peace. That is how it is called in the Old Testament: My covenant of peace, or My everlasting covenant of peace.
Peace is therefore characteristic of the New Covenant, while strife and division are characteristic of the Old Covenant of the law.
Whenever the Bible speaks of grace and/or peace, that is the designation of the New Covenant. The same applies to the words comfort and consolation.
When it says we have peace with God, it could just as well have said: We live under the New Covenant.
In Ephesians 4, the opening verses speak of the unity of believers and the bond of peace—that is, the New Covenant.
We have that peace through Jesus Christ. That is of course true, for He is our peace (Ephesians 2:14).

Romans 5:2
By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
“Access” = approach, entrance, a driveway.
“Wherein we stand” = evidently we stand somewhere.
God raises up. Regeneration is a process upon a fallen man, whereby he is raised up. His enemies, by the way, fell backwards in great numbers.
Ephesians 6:14
Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness…We should put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand and withstand. Moreover, we should also walk, and we have One who will keep us from stumbling. We stand; that is in contrast to the fall. We were all fallen people, but the Lord raises us up.
The question here is where we stand. We stand in grace. Our position is therefore in grace. Which grace? This grace. Grace is one of the marks designating the New Covenant, but in the previous verse stood the other mark of the New Covenant: peace. Those words belong together and together designate the New Covenant, in which we stand and under which we live. We therefore stand in the grace of the New Covenant.
The gospel is the gospel of God, which He had promised afore. Gospel = good or glad tidings. It is the preaching of the New Covenant. For God had promised it afore. The glad tidings are that this New Covenant has now come. We believe that glad tidings and therefore trust that New Covenant. That is why it can quite properly say that by faith we stand in this grace.
That is in fact what verse 2 says, but the difficulty of this verse is that it also says we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand.
That was the driveway. Have we now gone up it or not? That is to say: do we stand in grace, or do we have access into grace? That seems a contradiction, but it is not, for it concerns two different things.
Just as being justified by faith is a legal matter, so is standing in grace. We have been acquitted by God and have therefore received grace from God. We are therefore no

longer under the law, for where grace reigns, the law does nothing any more. Grace is therefore officially our place. There we stand.
For many believers, however, this does not fully sink in, because they do not trust what God has spoken, and so they continue to live under the dominion of sin, because they live under the dominion of the law. If there is one doctrine the New Testament speaks about, it is that we have been delivered from the law and should rejoice in that. The law belongs to the elementary principles of the world. People are accustomed to it and do not want to be without law. You need it, surely. But the Bible says we are delivered from the law and that the law is a ministration of death.
That law is precisely the threshold between life in the world and life with the Lord. It is the difference between walking in darkness and walking in light. It is the difference between seeking the things which are on earth and seeking the things which are above. It is the difference between seeking what is in the world and seeking what is in the kingdom of God, and so on. That is the threshold. If you do not cross it, if you do not go up that access, that driveway, then you simply continue living in the world. You may be a believer, but in the practice of your life you do nothing with it. It is like a life insurance policy; you get nothing from it. Only when you die do others perhaps benefit. So it is with living under the law; it makes no difference in this life, but if you should die, at least you go to heaven.
But our position is in grace. God has placed us there, and we should stand there in the practice of our life. We live in a world that God has let go. That world is therefore in darkness and must fend for itself. God has acquitted us and drawn us out of this world. Now the intention is that we should actually withdraw from that world and then also actually learn to live from the grace in which we have been placed. That should determine our life. That is the first threshold which someone who has come to faith should cross. We should stand in the liberty, not misuse it, but serve God in that liberty, with a purged conscience, because nothing condemns us. We should enter there. That is called here an access, and elsewhere an entrance.
Hebrews 4:16
Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
The throne of grace implies the reign of grace. This means that the highest principle in our life is not the law, but grace.
Grace reigns. Grace overrules. Those are the higher rules that set aside the lower ones. We should come boldly to the throne of grace.
Hebrews 10:19–22
Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
And having an high priest over the house of God;
Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
It is about consciously entering that grace, standing in it. That we consciously draw near to the throne of grace. This means we leave the law and the world behind and live from the New Covenant.
Ephesians 3:12
In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

We should come with boldness. By the faith of Him we have boldness and access. That is therefore a practical matter. You may believe you stand in grace, but you should also consciously live from it. We stand in grace, but we should also draw near there. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). For that we have access.
And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
Here, therefore, the past, present, and future of the believer are mentioned. Namely: we were guilty, but God has meanwhile acquitted us, justified us. Now we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We have left the past behind, for God has acquitted us. Since then we have peace with God and stand in grace, and for the future we expect the glory of God. Or, as Romans 8:18 says: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." We look forward to that. We look for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). Glory has been promised to us.
Glory = honour; dominion and thus crown = throne.
We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.
This is not yet expounded here in Romans 5, but it is already introduced.
We have been justified by faith and have peace with God. We have access into the grace in which we officially already stand; we only need to learn to live from it. And we rejoice in the glory we expect. Because this is so, the worse news now follows…Romans 5:3
And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
We rejoice in the glory God has promised us with a view to the future. That glory has to do with the better promises of the New Covenant. But we also glory in tribulations. Knowing that…We know, namely, that those tribulations accomplish something. That is why we also glory in tribulations. Those tribulations must in some way lead to the glory that shall be revealed in us. That is also stated in chapter 8, but here it is put differently, while James says we should count it all joy when we fall into various temptations (James 1:2).
Tribulation works patience. Out of tribulation comes patience. Tribulation is a limitation. When you are under pressure, you are held back. When you are pressed, you put your foot down harder. You do not let yourself be put under pressure just like that. You throw yourself even more into the subject and want to know exactly how it is. The result of tribulation is that you tackle it with even more energy. If you are cycling and have a headwind, you simply pedal harder.
Patience is passion. You are driven from within to go on. The other meaning is endurance, perseverance.

Romans 5:4
And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
"Experience" = proven character. When you have experience, you have undergone something. Then you have learned something. You learn from tribulations. Without falling you do not grow up.
Experience works hope. That too is an old biblical principle. Experience teaches that trouble is temporary. Experience also teaches that prosperity is temporary—at least under the sun, in this life. Everything here is temporary, but the nice thing is that on the

ground of our justification by faith we have received everlasting life, and so the story ends well. Prosperity may go up and down, but it is not temporary. It is all's well that ends well. Tribulation is temporary and passes away definitively.
After sunshine comes rain. That is so under the sun, but in the life we have received on the ground of our justification, sunshine comes after rain. We look to the future with hope.

Romans 5:5
And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
That hope does not make ashamed. It does not disappoint, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We are joined to that love of God, because God has planted His life in our hearts. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We live from that knowledge.
We are joined to the living God, because God has given us His life. Because the Lord Jesus dwells in our hearts. God has made us partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). He has given us the Holy Ghost. It is the same under all circumstances.
The Holy Ghost has been given to us. The life of God is in us, and therefore nothing can go wrong. Perhaps by our standards, and then only temporarily, but by God's standards not. That is why the same Spirit is called the earnest of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14), until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. The redemption of our body. That is a guarantee, a pledge.
Here the same thing is said, but with a few different terms.
Instead of speaking of the Holy Ghost in the following verses, it speaks of Christ, who does something for us. That is exactly the same.
What is called the Holy Ghost in verse 5 is called Christ in verse 6. He ensures that we are saved from wrath (verse 9).

Romans 5:6
For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
For Christ. It should have been: for the Holy Ghost. But it says Christ. And it has to be so, or the sentence cannot be completed.
"In due time" = at His time.
Christ died for us in due time, when we were yet without strength. Now the question is what He does now (for us), now that we are no longer without strength, but have become children of God.
Without strength = ungodly.

Romans 5:7
For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
This implies that He died for unrighteous people. It is just conceivable that someone would die for a righteous man, for a good man.

Romans 5:8
But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

We were without strength and therefore ungodly and therefore unrighteous and therefore sinners. In verse 10 it still says we were enemies. All those things we were. Then He did something for us.
But what does He now do for us, now that we have become children of God? God commended His love toward us in that Christ died for us when we were yet sinners and He was not yet the Christ. For He was made Christ by His resurrection from the dead.

Romans 5:9
Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
He now does much more: He saves us from wrath.
“Much more” is repeated later in chapter 8. Christ died for us; yes, much more, who is risen again (Romans 8:34).
Now that we are justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath. Which wrath? The wrath that is revealed against all who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). That wrath is now and is now upon the world. The world is under that wrath. That wrath is expressed in God having let the world go and given it over to its own lusts. That wrath consists, for example, in darkness. If we are saved from that, then we are drawn out of that darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13). Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Galatians 1:4), implying that He places us in the age to come, which began at the resurrection of Christ.
If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:6–7). He places us in another sphere, in another position.
According to Romans 5:2, in that of grace instead of law, in that of light instead of darkness. That is what He now does for us, and He brings us to the inheritance reserved for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:4).

Romans 5:11
And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.
He has been given all power and authority and has placed Him in that position as Head over the church (Ephesians 1:20–22). What then does He do for the church? He cleanses them in practice (Ephesians 5:25 ff.). In other words, we are saved—from darkness, from wrath, and so on.
This verse links back once more to verses 2 and 3. The subject has not changed. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God (verse 2). We also glory in tribulations, for those tribulations bring us to that glory (verse 3). But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. We have now received the atonement. From that we live in practice. The Lord cares for us, rescues us from the world, and draws us out of the ignorance and darkness of the world. This is the place we now have and the summary of our position as children of God. All the epistles speak of this. All the epistles are addressed to believers who believe in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. On that ground they have been born again, but

what now? Many think that out of gratitude they must keep the law, thereby ignoring what the whole New Testament teaches us: that we have precisely been delivered from it. The law was a curse, a yoke, a ministration of death. It brought you into darkness, whereas the intention is that we should be drawn out of that darkness. We have received light and peace, and in practice the Lord brings us there. But the problem is that many believers resist the work that God wants to do in, on, and through them, following the bad example of Peter in John 13. There the Lord expressed His present work by washing the disciples' feet. But Peter said: "Never." The Lord replied that if he refused, he had no part with Him. At any rate not in practice. So in our days many believers resist and prefer to cling to the law, to their own principles and philosophies, and so on, instead of simply believing what God says.
We are justified by His resurrection, not by His death. We are saved by His life, by what God is now doing. They prefer to cling to what God once did in the past when we were still sinners and refuse to live according to the principles of the New Covenant and to stand in grace. That is what this is about. This is expounded further in the rest of this chapter and in the two following chapters, with the climax in chapter 8: that we who are children of God are being led to our adoption as sons. We are not only children of God, but we should grow up to sons of Him, because an inheritance is laid up for us in heaven. The intention is that we should prove worthy of it in the future. That we may share in the glory of Christ. He is bringing many sons to glory. That is why He went through death, so that He might give us a new position and lead us in that new position to our final destiny. That does indeed involve tribulation, but we count that tribulation great joy, for through that tribulation we are formed and made fit for our future adoption as sons. That is what we live from.
We are part of another and new humanity, with all the consequences that follow. The following section is about that.

Comparison of Christ with Adam

This following passage flows directly from what has gone before, in which it was explained that we who are justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received all kinds of blessings. The blessings of the believer are indeed the blessings of Christ. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). That is the opposite of our being cursed with every material curse in Adam. That contrast is also what Romans 5 is about. As natural people we were Adamites and had part in Adam, but now that we are born again we are part of another humanity, which has not Adam but Christ as Head.
Christ cares for us. He saves us from the present wrath of God. We are saved by His life, because He lives.

Romans 5:12
Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:
Through one man not only sin entered into the world, but also death.
World = kosmos, the universe.
In the Bible this word often takes on a more limited meaning through the context. Here it obviously concerns the world of mankind. In English the same applies. The world is not

always as vast as the universe. Sin was not brought into creation by Adam, for the serpent was already sinful before Adam was.
Sin seems to be a moral issue and death a physical one, but in reality they are one whole. Sin is not merely a moral issue and cannot be overcome by ethics or law, for sin is in our nature. We are sinners because we descend from Adam. He passed that sinful nature on to us. We can do nothing about that. Nevertheless we are fully 100% responsible for it if we continue to sin, because God has provided in Christ that we can receive another nature. He has therefore offered us a way out.
Through one man, therefore, sin entered the world of mankind, and with it death. Those two things belong together.
Although that sinful nature is not always immediately recognised or acknowledged, yet all people up to now have died, which at any rate proves that they are sinners. The conclusion of this verse is that all people have sinned.
Man has inherited the sin of Adam. Original sin, then.
That is not a biblical word, but it is a biblical concept. Original sin stands opposite to sinful acts.
Many want to combat that original sin. They shift the blame onto the devil. There is even a teaching that says man is by nature good, but that it is the power of the devil, the evil spirits in man, that make him sin. And therefore the thing to do is to cast out those evil spirits. When someone has done something wrong, then it is because of the power of the devil. For that purpose they reason away so-called original sin.
Yet that we have inherited the sinful nature of Adam is stated here in verse 12. For we have all sinned in Adam. It does not say that exactly, but it does say that because all people have died up to now, they have therefore all sinned. Since death is a symptom or consequence of sin, all people must be sinners, or they would not have died.
“In whom” = ep’ hō.
Ep comes from epi = upon, in the sense of piling up, and thus it is a matter of cause and effect. You could translate the word as “because,” but better is “from which it follows.” Since death has passed upon all men, it follows (the proofs pile up) that evidently all men have sinned. This reading of the verse proves correct when we read the next two verses. There it is explained.

Romans 5:13
(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.
The law came only very late. From Adam to Moses covers a period of about 2500 years. All that time mankind had to do without law. After that the law was given only to the children of Israel. Mankind in general has therefore in fact always had to do without law. In any case, before the law came there was no law at all, and sin is not imputed when there is no law. If there is no law, then you cannot know, recognise, or establish the sinful nature. That sinful nature manifests itself where law reigns. For the law says you must not do this and must not do that, and you must do this and do that. What then becomes clear? First, that he makes nothing of it, and second, that he has a tendency to go against that law. You see it in small children. If they are not allowed to do certain things, they will immediately try to test the boundaries and see what happens when they cross them. By setting boundaries they themselves immediately stand at that boundary and try to push it further. If you did not give them that law, they would not bother to push it. You would not then put the idea into their heads.

The law was given so that sin might abound. The law was added because of transgressions. Not to reduce transgressions, for if there is no law, there are not even transgressions. That is technically impossible. But the law constitutes man a transgressor and also causes transgressions to increase.
Because the law actually does not improve man but rather makes him worse, it thereby proves that he is a sinner. When you activate him, he sins.
By the law is the knowledge of sin. Not sins, but knowledge of original sin.
Sin = sinful nature (original sin);
Sins = sinful acts.

Romans 5:14
Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.
What reigns has the greatest power. Death is therefore the greatest power in anyone's life. People always try to fight death, but it has never succeeded. Death reigned from Adam to Moses; thus also in the time when there was still no law. Even then people died—all of them.
Moreover there were people who had not sinned nearly as badly as Adam, yet they died. What does that prove? Not that they had sinned, but that they were sinners. For death is after all the consequence of sin. All people are therefore sinners by nature. That is concluded from the reign of death.
To have sin does not necessarily mean doing sin, but can also mean having sin.
In the preceding verses up to this verse it first speaks of the sinful nature that is in all people, because all descend from Adam and all have died, but now it says that Adam was not the final goal of God's creative work.

Romans 5:14
...who is the figure of him that was to come.
That was to come. "Was to" is the auxiliary verb of the future tense. When "was to" stands in the past tense, we lose the thread. Adam was already in the past a type of Him who would later come and who has meanwhile come. Adam was beforehand a type of Christ. When God in Genesis 1 says: "Let us make Adam in our image, after our likeness," this means that the Adam of Genesis 1 is not the man God had in mind there. He is there only the matrix, the form of. God first made a mould. A mould is a matrix, a mother, a form. After that form the final product is made.
A typos = an impression, just as, for example, a footprint in the sand. The letters of a typewriter are the types. They have the form of the letters that are to appear on the paper. Adam is the mould, the type, so to speak.
About 3000 years after the type was made, his official heir openly asks: "Who is that Adam really?" (Psalm 8).
David, who was the heir of Adam, the firstborn of all mankind and thus the bearer of the title "son of Adam" = son of man, asks: "Who really is that son of man of whom Thou, God, hast spoken?" In other words, Adam himself was not it. Then he must be one of his descendants. David realised that he was not it either and wondered who then it really was. We find the answer to that question in Hebrews 2, where Psalm 8 is quoted at length. That Man proves to be Jesus, whom we indeed see crowned with glory and honour and who is indeed set over the works of God's hands. Will the real Adam please

stand up? That is exactly what He did. The real Adam has stood up. He is therefore also called the last Adam. After that there comes no more. Why should there? He lives! Thereby He is that Adam who was to come, the real one. The first Adam is therefore a picture of Him who was to come. But how, since He brought sin into the world? Through His sinning, death suddenly entered the whole world. That is why our cat also dies. All the consequence of Adam's transgression. How then can that man be a picture of Christ? That is not so difficult to understand, for impressions, types, are usually exactly the opposite of the real image. So it is with Adam and Christ. Adam is in high degree a negative impression of Christ. In high degree, because that aspect is mentioned first in the following verses.

Romans 5:15
But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
But not as... Is it then the same, or is it not the same? It is the same, but reversed and thus a kind of not the same.
As the offence, so also the free gift. Just as the offence, so also the free gift. So, but then reversed, for "not" stands before it. The free gift stands opposite the offence. Free gift and offence are not of the same nature; the one is negative and the other positive. Thereby they fit into each other. The one is a reversed image of the other.
Now comes the explanation.
For if through the offence of one many be dead... Finish the story yourself and colour the pictures. You can think up the rest of the story yourself. Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Through the offence of one many have died; through the free gift of One many have received everlasting life.
It concerns a comparison. You therefore get two sentences that run parallel and are compared with each other. The easiest is to place those two sentences under each other. You then immediately see which words you must leave out to get exactly the same contrasting sentences.
Through the offence of one, many dead. This is itself already a comparison. Through the offence of one many (many are sometimes all and sometimes not all. That has nothing further to do with the whole story. It is not about whether someone is excepted or not; it is about there simply being many.) have died. Now once more:
Through the offence of one, many dead.
Through the free gift of One, many everlasting life.
That is what it comes down to. The free gift of God has abounded unto many. That means they have received everlasting life, for that is the opposite of dying.
In this verse, therefore, the free gift of God and the gift by grace are described as abundant. More abundant, namely, than that one offence. The trouble is that in many Christian circles people dwell on that one offence and its consequences, but fail to dwell on the abundance of the grace of God, which is much more abundant. The abundant riches of God's grace are far stronger and greater than that one offence.
This was the first of the total of seven comparisons between Adam and Christ, the essence of which is that whereas we first had part in the first Adam and all that belongs to him, we are now in Christ and thus now have part in His blessings. Our salvation is

essentially settled in the Lord Jesus Christ. For the redemption is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3). That is our position. We are not people who have been tinkered with a bit, nor that now we are believers we have a Lord who cares for us. That is far too low. We have been transferred from one humanity to the other; from Adam to Christ. Since then we have part in the blessings of Christ as firstfruits belonging to a new humanity and living under the New Covenant and in a new creation. All those old things of Adam we have left behind.

Romans 5:16
And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.
The guilt was indeed from one offence unto condemnation;
The free gift is from many offences unto justification.
Condemnation = condemnation.
Justification does not exist. It is justification.
To justify = to acquit.
The judge condemns or he acquits.
Condemnation therefore stands opposite acquittal.
Guilt is from one offence unto condemnation;
Free gift is from many offences unto justification.
This was the second comparison.

Romans 5:17
For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
Through one offence death reigned (over the living), through one, namely through Adam;
Through abundance of grace the living reign (over death), through One, namely Jesus Christ.
It concerns the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. It is a gift of God that we are acquitted.
This was the third comparison.

Romans 5:18
Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
The translators have extended the comparison and set guilt opposite grace. That is not the right comparison.
Through one offence upon all unto condemnation;
Through one righteousness upon all unto justification of life.
But justification does not exist, so it should read: unto justification, acquittal.
The one offence is set opposite the one righteousness. The one offence of Adam opposite the one righteousness of Christ. Upon all; on the one side unto condemnation and on the other unto justification of life, unto acquittal of life.
The remarkable thing is that the one offence of Adam is set opposite one righteousness of Christ. There is therefore something very special about Christ: one righteousness. Of

which righteous activity of Christ does this speak? It is not said here, but it is in the following comparison.
First another look at the sentences opposite each other:
Through one offence upon all unto condemnation;
Through one righteousness upon all unto acquittal of life.
This was the fourth comparison.

Romans 5:19
For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
Sin, disobedience, and unbelief are here completely one and the same thing.
Which sin? That of unbelief, namely that of disobedience.
If this applies to sin, unbelief, and disobedience, then it also applies to the opposites of these concepts. We then get righteousness, faith, and obedience.
The righteousness of Christ is therefore His obedience, His faith.
This was the fifth comparison.

Romans 5:20
Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;
The law entered moreover. The law was added. It came later still. It came on top of everything else. Why? That the offence might abound. The offence—the sinful nature—became greater through the coming of the law. For sin increases. Sin is activated by the law. The law provokes man. Because man is a sinner, sin becomes active in him, and thus the law causes man to sin. Philosophy—and therefore theology too—thinks it works the other way round: that the law combats sin and so reduces it. But according to the Bible the law is no good. The law is weak and unprofitable and is therefore in practice a curse. Not that there is anything wrong with the law itself—for the law is holy, just, and good—but it was laid upon the flesh. The flesh must therefore bear the law, but the flesh cannot bear it, and therefore it does not work.
Is it not terrible, then, that the law causes sin to increase? That makes no difference at all, for the simple reason that we have died to the law and therefore do not live under the law. Where the law causes sin to increase, we at any rate suffer no harm from it, for we do not live under the law.
But it makes no difference anyway, for—the next sentence—where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.
What was first called the offence that increases is now called sin that increases. By "offence" is therefore not meant a specific offence, but the sinful nature, and thus not a specific sin, but sin in general.
The comparison is:
Sin has increased;
Grace has abounded much more.
Grace therefore overrules sin.
However great the sin and however many the sins, grace is more abundant than sin, so that in practice the increase of sin through the law ultimately redounds to the glory of God, because thereby His grace becomes even greater. That does not redound to the glory of man, but that was never, of course, the purpose of God's work.

We should now really read Romans 6:1, for that verse confirms what we have just read: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” God forbid. One might draw the wrong conclusion and then go on sinning a great deal. For the more we sin, the more we are forgiven, and thus the greater is the grace of God. Is that not to the glory of God? So let us sin to the glory of God. That may seem so, but it is twisted reasoning and at any rate not the purpose God has set Himself. Man is generally a master at abusing things. Especially the grace of God.

Romans 5:21
That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.
That… Now comes the purpose of the whole matter, and with it we also come to the climax of the entire exposition and to the introduction of the next chapter.
That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign. We had already understood that from the previous verse, for grace has proved to be much more abundant than sin, and thus grace reigns. The power of God’s grace is stronger than sin. If all is well, we as children of God live from that every day.
When Paul prayed for strength, the Lord said to him: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” 2 Corinthians 12:9. If you write that in two sentences one under the other, you see that grace is power. For grace reigns. It is the greatest power in our life. It is the power from which we live under the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant the law reigns, and thus sin, for the law causes sin to increase. That is the theme of chapter 6 and to a large extent also of chapter 7.
That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.
“Might reign” = that was beforehand the intention, as part of God’s plan of the ages.
Sin hath reigned unto death;
Grace might reign unto eternal life.
Grace might reign unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, implies that sin hath reigned unto death through Adam. Then you have completed the ellipse. An ellipse is a figure of speech in which certain words are omitted because they are rather superfluous. They would be perfectly clear without them.
Not only through Jesus Christ, but also through our Lord. For He is the Master whom we should serve. For we should not serve sin, but the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore righteousness.
That as sin hath reigned through death. That is the position of the natural man, of the sinner in Adam. The greatest and unconquerable power in our life is sin, and it brings us into death. Sin and corruption are related. They form one whole.
Sin = to miss. If you sin, you lack. Life, namely. We lose that through sin. Sin is to miss, but to die is also to miss. Then you miss fellowship. Then there is separation, and that falls under the concept of sin.
Sin hath reigned unto death. Opposite that stands the power of the grace of God. In the life of the believer, therefore, neither the law nor sin reigns, but grace.
The continuation of this verse is, of course, chapter 6, but it could also have been the epistle to the Hebrews, for that too is about our living as children of God under the New Covenant, in which grace reigns and in which we should come with boldness to the throne of grace.

First it is said that the Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest heavens. That is therefore the throne of Christ, but in Hebrews 4 it is called the throne of grace, implying that grace reigns and that grace should be the ruling principle in our lives. What, then, is the basis of Christian ethics? Not the Ten Commandments, as is usually answered, but grace and therefore forgiveness. First of all from the Lord Jesus toward us. He acquits us. As a logical consequence we forgive one another, even as Christ has forgiven us. The principle of the New Covenant is therefore that God does not impute our sins and offences to us.
People found that a dangerous doctrine. That is why the covenant theology was invented. Grace is not abolished, for everyone knows you need it, but grace is cunningly mixed with the law in such a way that we no longer see the difference. Thus an appeal can always be made to the law. The Bible is clear: grace reigns.
Sin hath reigned unto death. We then say: “unto death follows,” for in Genesis it already says: “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” In other words, from that day death would work. When death enters, that is actually the end of the working of death. Dying is not the beginning of the working of death, but the end.
The same applies to “that grace might reign unto eternal life.” That grace reigns only where we have first received that eternal life, just as sin reigns where one is a sinner and from the first moment. But eternal life has no end, whereas the working of death does. Where sin is, there is death. Where sin works, death works. Where death is complete, sin is also complete, for he that is dead is freed from sin - Romans 6:7. Then death has done its work, and sin too. Both are ended.
The other side is that grace might reign, not so that one might one day receive eternal life. Grace reigns where one has received that eternal life. That grace also activates that eternal life. The life of Christ in us is activated and nourished by our being taught by and from grace.
See that no one fails of the grace of God - Hebrews 12:15.
Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28.
The saving grace of God has appeared to all men and teaches us - Titus 2:11–12. And thus it nourishes us. Thereby and therein we are taught.
The growth of believers to spiritual maturity consists in practice in our learning to live from the principle of grace. That we can always go to God. That we can always ask something of Him. He upbraids not. In short, that God is gracious despite who we are and what we have got up to again. Our acquittal is not settled in our deeds, but in that one righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Thereby we also learn to forgive others and to bear with one another, to bear reproach with Christ outside the camp, and so on. Those things are the fruit of the grace of God.
Not the absence of the law and not the forgiveness of offences should reign in our life, for we would abuse that and use it as an occasion for the flesh. Grace should reign. What flows from that is the fruit of the Spirit.
How then should we as children of God live? Live in sin, because the grace of God is then greater? That could very well be, but that was not the intention. It is to be hoped that it is also not our intention to remain in sin and abuse it. We have been cleansed inwardly so that we might serve the living God. We have been made able to be ministers of the New Covenant, and we should actually use that ability. In any case, our salvation is settled in the Lord Jesus Christ, who once made atonement for the sins of the world

and who since then, as raised from the dead, has become Head of a new humanity. Just as Adam was of the old humanity, so Christ is of the new humanity. He has overcome sin and death. Since then there is redemption in the living Christ. Through Him grace should reign under the New Covenant.
Let us once more list all the comparisons between Adam and Christ:

- Through the offence of one, many dead.
  Through the free gift of One, many everlasting life.
- Guilt is from one offence unto condemnation;
  Free gift is from many offences unto justification.
- Through one offence death reigned (over the living), through one, namely through Adam;
  Through abundance of grace the living reign (over death), through One, namely Jesus Christ.
- Through one offence upon all unto condemnation;
  Through one righteousness upon all unto acquittal of life.
- Through the disobedience of one man many sinners;
  Through the obedience of One many justified.
- Sin has increased;
  Grace has abounded much more.
- Sin hath reigned unto death;
  Grace might reign unto eternal life.

Romans 6:1
What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
Shall we continue in sin? In verse 15 it asks whether we shall sin. The answer to both questions is: “God forbid.” Absolutely not.
Both questions are taken from the last verse of chapter 5, which says that grace should reign. That is the situation in which we live in this present time. We know a throne of grace, so that grace is the all-ruling principle under which we are placed. Therefore all the sins we commit are also forgiven. Shall we therefore go on sinning? That could very well be, for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. But if you do that, you use the power of grace as an occasion for the flesh. Then grace becomes a cloak for a dissolute way of life.
The purpose of the reign of grace, however, is not that we should continue in sin, but that we should use it to serve God. For that we have been graced in Christ, for that we have received new life. That new life we should use in the service of and thus to the glory of God.
The question whether we shall continue in sin suggests that man is evidently in that position of sin. He is in sin. That is his domicile. Nevertheless our position as a child of God is different. We have peace with God and we stand in grace. That is the opposite of standing in sin. We stand in grace. Not so that we should sin, although that is possible, but it is not the intention. God forbid indeed.

Romans 6:2
God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
Dead to sin = dead for sin. We are by nature sinners and subject to the dominion of sin and therefore serve sin. We are slaves of it. But now that we have died with Christ,

because one died for all and therefore all died, we are reckoned to be free from the bondage to sin. From now on we should serve grace, because it is stronger than sin. We have died for sin; how then shall we still live in it? That can never be the intention!

Romans 6:3–4
Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
The problem with these verses is that the word “baptism” occurs in them. Here, however, it is not about water baptism. In Greek there are two different words for baptism. Those words are related to each other.
Bapto = baptism in the sense of immersion.
Baptizo = this is the usual word for baptism. This word presupposes immersion and saturation, as a sponge soaks up water. It is to saturate with. We encounter that once.
1 Corinthians 12:13
For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.
It is to become one with. That sponge is not only saturated with water, but has become one whole with the water.
1 Corinthians 10:1–2
Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
All were baptized unto Moses, baptized in the cloud, and baptized in the sea. Baptism unto Moses has nothing to do with water, baptism in the cloud neither, and baptism in the sea neither, for the people did not even get wet when they passed through the Red Sea. The only explanation is that they became one with...The people of Israel were one with Moses. Where Moses went, there the people went too. They were baptized in the cloud. Where that cloud went, there the people went too.
If you know that meaning, then you understand that in Romans 6 it is not about water baptism, not about the ritual of baptism, but about reality.
Know ye not, that so many of us as have become partakers of Jesus Christ... That this is what it means is also clear from the context. Just look at the next verse.

Romans 6:5
For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
To have been planted together with Him is the same as to have been baptized in Him. The plant here is not a geranium or something like that, but an organism. If we have become one organism with Him. If we have become one body with Him. We are therefore one with Him. We have been made like Him and have partaken of His blessings.
If therefore we have been baptized in Jesus Christ, then we have been baptized in His death. If we have become one plant with Him, then we are reckoned to have died with Him. Then we have been buried with Him, through baptism into death. And we have therefore also been raised with Him. And to complete the story, according to Ephesians

2 we have also been seated with Him in heavenly places. The idea is that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
In Christ = baptized in Christ; joined to Him; one with Him.
We have therefore been baptized in Jesus Christ. Baptism is indeed a picture of that, but that is not the issue here.

Romans 6:5
For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
The word “shall” can once again lead to misunderstanding here. We have been taught that “shall” is the auxiliary verb of the future tense, so we naturally think it refers to the future. But an auxiliary verb of the future tense has to do with grammar, with structure in the language. It has nothing whatever to do with time. We simply call it that.
“Shall” is the same as “must.” The thought is that if the one thing is true, the other must also be true. Not later—because it is an auxiliary verb of the future tense—but if the one is true, the other must be true as well. When you translate “shall” into German, do you use werden or sollen? In this case you use sollen. That is our word “shall,” but if you translate sollen back into English, you get “must.” If it is true that we have died with Christ, then it must also be true that we have been raised with Him. If we have been raised with Him, then it must also be true that we have been seated with Him in heaven. In English this is indeed called “shall,” but it does not point to the future—it points to the present.
When it says, “Ye shall be my witnesses,” it does not mean there that they must be so. Why not? Because the context makes it clear. “Ye shall be my witnesses” is an affirmation of a fact. That is how it will be. And that has indeed proved true, for later in Acts 4 Peter says: “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” They did not have to; they could do nothing else.
If you impose a time concept on it, then first one thing is true and later—in the future—the other follows. But it is not about the future; it is about the present. It is about logical reasoning.
We have been raised with Christ. That is the same as being born again. Christ has caused us to be born again through His resurrection. We have part in His victory over death and over corruption in general, and therefore also over sin. That is why we must know…

Romans 6:6
Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
“Our old man” points back once more to chapter 5—to Adam in contrast with Christ and Christians. The old man; that is the sinner who has been crucified with Christ. Now comes the purpose again: that…That the body of sin might be destroyed. It is not about the sinful body being destroyed, for that has still not happened. The body has not been destroyed—except for sin. The body is by nature a slave of sin, because sin reigns over man. So when man does something, he sins. That is why it is pointless to activate a man, just as it is pointless to activate a believing man. He will undoubtedly sin, and that serves no purpose.

The body is destroyed for sin. The body that is by nature subject to the dominion of sin has died and is now no longer subject to the dominion of sin. Is sin then no longer there? Yes, that sin is still there. Nothing has changed about that. But what has changed is that we, because we have been crucified with Christ and therefore died, are reckoned to be dead and therefore no longer slaves of sin, for since then grace reigns (Romans 5:21).In other words, if sin has not in practice been taken away, yet grace still reigns over us, then this means that grace is stronger, more powerful than sin. That is the situation in which we live. We may perhaps not be able to withdraw ourselves from sin and the working of sin, but we can submit ourselves to grace so that it would overrule—even in the practice of our life. There is an alternative.
Perhaps in theory the power of sin does not become smaller (though in practice it does), but the power of grace is greater. We may perhaps still sin just as much as before we came to faith, but we no longer suffer any harm from it.
It is therefore not the intention that we should remain in sin, but that we should make ourselves available to the Lord so that we might serve Him. Normally we would say that is impossible, because we are still sinful people, but it is possible—because although we still sin, we no longer incur any guilt feelings from it. Now you could say again that we can therefore remain in sin, but then you have missed the turning.
But now the practice. You can indeed say that we no longer live under sin but under the dominion of grace, but actually experiencing that is something else. You can only learn that by paying no attention to your own reasoning and experiences, but only to the Word of God. That Word says that God purges our conscience (not our body) from dead works. Why? That we might serve the living God Hebrews 9:14. That is the purpose. To what have we been turned from idols? 1 Thessalonians 1:9 To serve the living and true God.
To what does Christ cleanse the church with the washing of water by the word? That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish Ephesians 5:27. That connection must be kept in view.
There are children of God who evidently need that sense of sin, but the precise intention is that we should lack that sense. That is precisely what we have been delivered from. We should no longer have knowledge of sin. When we are truly cleansed and reconciled, we no longer have knowledge of sins. That is the purpose of the purging of our conscience. Of course we know we are sinners, and that we sin—for if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8—but it no longer stands in our way. We have been cleansed by that grace and by the knowledge of it. That is why it repeatedly says: “We know that…” or “knowing this, that…” or “know ye not that…?”The purpose of the reign of grace is that our consciences should be purged, so that we might come with boldness into the sanctuary to place our lives, our bodies, at His disposal—without saying that you are a sinner and no good. We have been cleansed to serve Him and to walk to the glory of the Father. That is what verse 6 says.

Romans 6:6
Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
We should therefore no longer live in bondage to sin. We have not been delivered from the working of sin, but from the dominion of sin. God does indeed activate us to walk in

the good works which He has prepared - Ephesians 2:10. That does not result in our beginning to sin, but in God being glorified in our walk.
To be destroyed = to be made nothing. It is still there, but it serves no purpose any more.

Romans 6:7
For he that is dead is freed from sin.
For he that is dead is acquitted from sin.

Romans 6:8
Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:“
Shall” here is again the same as in verse 5. If we have died with Him, then it must also be that we live with Him.

Romans 6:9
Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
Christ is always the standard and the example. We know that He has risen from among the dead and dies no more, for death no longer has dominion over Him.

Romans 6:10
For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
“Once” = once for all. Once and for all. Just as Christ once entered the sanctuary. Once for all; it changes no more. That is why our salvation is also settled.
He died unto sin once for all. Now He lives, and that He does unto God; to serve God.
The same principle is applied to us, for...

Romans 6:11
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
“Reckon” = count = logizomai.
“Unto sin” = for sin.
We reckon ourselves dead for sin, but alive unto God. It is logical, because we are in Christ our Lord, joined to Him. Without that there would of course be absolutely no question of it. Then we would be lost.
If these things are true for Christ, then they are also true for us, because we have been baptized in Him.
We have not only died for sin, but also for the law. That therefore also has no dominion over us. Just as we once lived under the dominion of sin, so we now live under the dominion of God and therefore of His grace.
“Our Lord” = not in the sense of our Jehovah, but in the sense of our Master, whom we serve. Formerly sin was our lord, but now Christ Jesus is our Lord. That is how it should be. That is why the exhortation now follows...

Romans 6:12
Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
Sin is on the one hand indeed a moral concept, but on the other hand it is also simply a physical matter. Sin works in our lives. That is how it is. By nature we are always inclined

to go the wrong way. The first question is whether man can do what he wants, but can he then also think what he wants? The answer to that is usually yes, but it is not correct, for if he can think what he wants, then he can also not think what he wants. But he simply cannot. As soon as you tell a man he must think of white bears, he does so; but if you command him not to think of white bears, he thinks precisely of white bears (Midas Dekkers), because it is not allowed. That is now the dominion of sin. As soon as it is not allowed, you have precisely the tendency to do it. So you also see that the dominion of sin is related to the dominion of the law. The law says you must not do this and not do that, which precisely puts the idea into your head to do it. It works exactly the wrong way round. We should therefore also do what the next verse says, namely...

Romans 6:13
Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
“Members” = body. Do not place them at the disposal of sin. It is still about our position here.
To yield = to take up a position. When something is yielded somewhere, it is placed somewhere. That is the place where it then stands. The question is therefore where we stand, where we are placed, or where we place ourselves. We have been placed by God in grace. Therein we should stand (Romans 5:2). We also stand in liberty (Galatians 5:1). God has placed us there, and the question now is where we place ourselves. We should draw the consequences from the redemption in which we have part.
“Instruments” = tools.
Do not yield your members to sin as tools of unrighteousness. The members of man’s body are his tools. The being is the essence of things, the inward part of it. We dwell in a body and are bound to it. That body is the tool. With it we could formerly only serve sin, but now we have been made able to serve righteousness with it as well. Since we have been justified from sin by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we serve righteousness, then we serve Christ with it, and thereby God. For that we should yield our members, our bodies. Here it is still doctrinal, but later in the epistle it is gone into more practically. That begins with our presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Living, because the life of Christ is in it. We offer our body to the Lord Jesus Christ and through Him to God. In Hebrews this is called coming with boldness to the throne of grace. That is exactly the same, only there it is drawn from the ordinances of the Day of Atonement. When we draw near to the throne, that is by definition to submit ourselves to Him who sits on the throne.
We should therefore place our bodies at God’s disposal, in the realisation that we have risen from the dead and become alive and thus serve righteousness. How do you do that? The question that should come before that is: what then is that righteousness? Righteousness in general means submitting oneself to the Word of God. Unrighteousness or sin is withdrawing from it, whether wilfully or not. The natural man cannot submit to it either, but God has solved that problem.
If therefore we serve righteousness, then we serve the gospel in which that righteousness is revealed. For the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. The righteousness of God does indeed consist in unrighteousness having been condemned

when the Lord Jesus suffered and died on the cross of Golgotha. Since then grace reigns. If therefore we should serve righteousness, that is the same as serving the grace of God. For in the gospel the grace of God is indeed revealed first. Nevertheless it is officially called the righteousness of God. That is connected with the old man having been judged and the new man having been made able to be a minister of Christ and of the righteousness of God, and according to 2 Corinthians 3, of the new covenant.
In other words, as ministers of righteousness we are ministers of grace (which also sits on the throne). This means we should live from grace, from what God gives us. The consequence of that is that we should also minister that grace. We should pass that grace on to others again. God has forgiven us, and just as He has forgiven us, so we should also forgive others (Colossians 3).
In yet other words, we should submit ourselves to the Word of God, serve that Word, and then also speak it. We do that with the tongue, but why should we not also give that Word hands and feet? That Word gives us something to do in our life and also largely determines our way. We should therefore walk in the good works which God has also prepared. Those are always works to the honour and glory of God Himself. Thereby sin is overcome. Then you no longer miss, for then it is completely on target. We are faithful to His Word, submit ourselves to it, and let that Word also do its work in us and through us. That indeed goes through the body.
If you think that our service to God consists only of inward things, that it is only in our heart, then that is a rather fatal misunderstanding. Like: “I keep my faith to myself. That is something inward, and I am not going to speak about it, for it is no one else’s business.” The point is precisely that it is everyone’s business. Moreover it is completely unhealthy to keep what is in you inside you. That is called constipation, frustration. In reality, when people cannot talk about things, it is usually because there is nothing there at all. Well, because it is completely below standard. For where the heart is full, the mouth overflows. And it is not only the tongue. That is where our practical life begins. Hands and feet come into play afterwards of their own accord.
We should be filled with the Word of God and especially pass it on, in one way or another. We should also live that Word.
The biblical term for that is reflecting, which unfortunately has been mistranslated. That is of course figurative language. In that imagery the Word of God is regarded as light. That light shines upon us and should be reflected, mirrored by us, as once happened with Moses when he was with the Lord on the mountain. When he came down from the mountain again, he reflected the light that had as it were shone upon him. He then had to put a veil on his face, because they could not bear that light. But Paul says that the intention is precisely that this light should be reflected.
2 Corinthians 3:18
But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.(Note: the correct rendering is “reflecting” or “mirroring,” not “beholding as in a glass.”)“Mirror” is a noun. When it becomes a verb, it is of course “to mirror” and not “to look in the mirror.” Reflecting is the same thing twice over.
The normal process of metabolism, and thus of growth, and thus of building, is that something comes in and something also goes out again. It is receiving and passing on in some way. We learn something and then put it into practice. Not because we must, but because it is self-evident. If that does not happen, then there is what the Bible calls

dropsy. Then you receive, but it stays inside and nothing is done with it. For clarity, that is a disease. Then it remains only theory. You carry it with you like a kind of luggage. Then you get nothing from it and it is only ballast. The intention, however, is that you should learn things and put them into practice. That brings change in our life. If it is only storing up, then nothing happens with it. Only when we do something with it does something change. Then not only our outward life changes, but also our inward life. Then we become someone. From that we derive our identity. That is how it works with the natural man, but also with the born-again man.
Ye have received freely, for it was grace, so give freely.
Where we receive the glory of the Lord and pass it on and as it were reflect it, there we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. That is a change from law to grace, from Old Covenant to New Covenant.
In short, we have been justified by God and therefore we should also serve that righteousness.

Romans 6:13
Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
Yield your members unto God as instruments of righteousness. Present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. We should not only come to faith in what God has said, but we should also submit ourselves to it. That means making ourselves available.
Christ in His resurrection offered Himself to God. Where He offered His body, we too have been offered with Him, because we are members of His body. Where the Head of the church has been consecrated to the service of God, there the members of that body are also consecrated to God. Those members are therefore at least priests. Christ has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father (Revelation 1:6. In other words, in our relationship with God it may be expected of us that He should be glorified in our lives. That can be because we have officially been acquitted from sin and made alive in Christ. In practice it is that life of Christ that should do its work in our life. From us it is expected that we should be willing to let that happen. That is why it remains a life from grace.
The consequence of that is that we must in the future be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, where every one may receive the things done in the body. It is indeed voluntary—you choose it—but it does have consequences.
Now what has gone before is explained, for the next sentence begins with “for”...

Romans 6:14
For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
That is twice “for.” We should serve righteousness, for sin shall not have dominion over us, but righteousness shall. Unfortunately this has become a completely unknown truth. We are not delivered from sin or from sinning, but from the dominion of sin. We can, if we will, do something different. That is what it is about.
Why shall sin not have dominion over us? For ye are not under the law.
Where the Mosaic law would be the norm for Christian morality and Christian ethics, there sin automatically reigns, whereas we have precisely been delivered from it.If we

are not under the law, that means we are not under the dominion of the law. The law is not the norm for our lives. The real norm is that of grace. And it is indeed true that when we live under the dominion of grace, the result in general is the fruit of the Spirit—namely love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Where we live under the dominion of grace and therefore accept forgiveness, there we shall also be ready to forgive others. If that governs our lives, we pass it on to others.

Where we live under the dominion of grace, we shall love the brethren. There we shall love our neighbour. Let that now be precisely the summary of the whole Mosaic law (Romans 13:8–9). The whole law is summed up in this one saying: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If you tell a man he must do that, he cannot, because it is a must. Under the New Covenant, however, where it is not a must—because one is free in it and lives from the forgiveness of sins and offences—precisely love for God arises, and he loves God with all his heart and all his mind and with everything that is in him. Thus at least a part of the purpose of the law is achieved through the dominion of grace. It is just not the purpose that achieves that purpose. The joke is that now it is no longer required, it is nevertheless achieved. Well, partially, as long as we are still in this body, but still. If we love our neighbour, that is the fulfilling of the law.

How do you come to love of neighbour? By living from grace. By letting grace reign in your life.

But where the law reigns over us, there sin reigns. We, however, do not live under the dominion of sin. Moreover we do not live under the dominion of the law, for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Under the dominion of that, naturally. That is our position.

Now to the practice. We may no longer dwell in sin, but shall we therefore also no longer sin?

Romans 6:15 (KJV)

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

No, of course not. We do not focus on whether we do sinful acts or not, but on doing works of righteousness. That is rather more practical than the first part of Romans 6, but in fact it comes to the same thing. It does not concern what we must or may do, or that certain things are forbidden for a Christian. That is law and that does not lead to good things. Moreover grace reigns and therefore God should be glorified in our lives. We should serve the Lord not only in our thoughts but also in our practical life. Thereby God is glorified in our lives. That is precisely the intention, because Christ also lives to the glory of the Father.

Grace reigns and is far more abundant than the law. Grace is higher, more excellent, and broader than the law. We could therefore continue sinning, but God forbid. That, however, does nothing to detract from the dominion of grace. We should hold to that and not fall away from it.

The first part of this chapter is chiefly about the position we have as children of God. The second part, from verse 15 onwards, is more about our practical life as believers.

The question then is whether we shall continue to serve sin or not, now that we are no longer under the law but under grace. To sin means not merely to commit sin—though that is the most common and neutral meaning of the term—but also to serve sin; to be

servants or slaves of sin. That is important to know. Not so much for this Scripture passage, but for example for the First Epistle of John, where it stands: Whosoever is born of God sinneth not. This does not mean that a born-again person does not commit sin, but that he does not serve sin. However that may be, we should not remain slaves of sin, even though we are not condemned for it because grace reigns. We have after all been delivered from the bondage of sin. That also stands in the next verse.

Romans 6:16
Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?
A servant. God became man and thereby took upon Himself the form of a servant, for the human form is the form of a slave. Thus the Lord Jesus indeed took a serving position. He served God and submitted Himself to the Word of God, with all the consequences that entailed. As a result God has also highly exalted Him.
So it is with man too. He is a servant and cannot become free, but he can choose whom he will serve. The point is that we have been set free from the bondage of sin, in order that (with the purpose that) we should be slaves of righteousness. It is no more difficult than that. To use the words of John: we were children of the devil and have become children of God. We have been set free from one bondage in order now to be bound in another way. We have not been set free so that we might be loose and masters over our own lives. Many Christians who no longer live under the law cry: “We are free, we are free,” and shout it to excuse their own loose behaviour. Of course we are free, but with a purpose. Moreover, free from what? We have been set free from the dominion of sin and the law, in order that we should serve righteousness (the opposite of sin) and grace (the opposite of law). That is why there is a throne of grace to which we should come with boldness, to place ourselves at the disposal of Him who sits upon that throne, to serve Him.
That is roughly the content of verse 16.
Slavery to sin leads to death. Bondage to sin brings about only corruption. If we serve sin, then death works in our lives. That means everything will go wrong. Death = broken fellowship; sin = to miss. That is to say, if you want to serve sin, then everything in your life will go wrong. Everything falls apart. There the law of Murphy applies: whatever can go wrong will go wrong.

Romans 6:17
But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you;
It should be clear that you must not read this verse only halfway. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin.” This falls into the category of: “Brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
What it actually says, of course, is that God is thanked for the fact that we were indeed formerly servants of sin, but have now from the heart obeyed the form of doctrine to which we were delivered. For the heart was purged from an evil conscience, that we might serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14. How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9. That is the purpose of it. We have not merely been delivered, but we have been delivered with a certain purpose. That is what this is about.

Instead of having become obedient to sin, we have become obedient to righteousness. That stood there first. Now it says that we have from the heart become obedient to the form of doctrine to which we were delivered. Which form? That of righteousness. For that was the opposite of sin. But what then is that righteousness, and why is it formulated in this way here? To what have we from the heart become obedient? To Christ! Him we should serve. Instead of Christ or righteousness another term stands here. For Christ has been made unto us the righteousness of God (1 Corinthians 1:30. The righteousness of God takes shape in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed. What is that gospel called? The gospel of Christ. The righteousness of God is therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the righteousness of God takes form. Him we serve. That righteousness of God we serve. The Lord Jesus, after all, who suffered and died for our sins and was raised from the dead. The righteousness of God therefore consists in our no longer serving sin, from which we have been delivered, because we have part in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Moreover we should no longer serve corruption, from which we have been delivered; and moreover we should no longer serve the law, because we have also been delivered from that. Instead we should serve grace, under the New Covenant. For that we have been set free, and that stands here too. We were servants of sin, but have now become servants of—not the doctrine, but the form of doctrine. Christ is the form of the doctrine. Form = typos = type, the impression, the representation.
The whole biblical doctrine expresses itself in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the form of the doctrine. The same has already been explained before, about man being a servant. The example of that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God but took the form of a servant when He was made like men. After the rapture of the church, are the graves of believers empty? Yes indeed. Does that stand in the Bible? No, but because Christ is the form of the doctrine and after His resurrection His grave was empty, it will therefore also be so at the rapture of the church, when all believers from this dispensation will rise. Christ is always the standard.

Romans 6:17
But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you;
We have from the heart become obedient to the living God, to Christ therefore, the form of the doctrine, to whom we have been delivered.
“To which” = to the form of the doctrine;
To Christ = to Him to whom we have been delivered.
We as believers have been given to Christ. That is even an understatement, for in Acts 2 it says we have been added to the Lord. We have been given by God to Christ. With what purpose? That we might serve Him. To prevent that, denominations choose a head for themselves. But we should serve Him and present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.
That God has given us to Christ is one side of the story, for on the other side Christ has given us back to God. That does not contradict, for God and Christ are one.Christ is therefore the form of the biblical doctrine. We follow Someone, but we know that Someone only from the doctrine. We know Christ only from the doctrine of the Bible, but

we do not follow only a doctrine, although we follow a doctrine. We follow Him who is the representation of that doctrine.

Romans 6:18
Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.
We have of course been set free from the slavery of sin. Therefore we are now slaves of righteousness. That we are under the New Covenant, of which Christ is the Surety and Mediator. That New Covenant cannot be broken. We do not serve God in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit - Romans 7:6. In 1 Corinthians 7 exactly the same things stand opposite each other. We are servants of the one or of the other. That we choose.

Romans 6:19
I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.
Paul speaks in very simple terms, so that even a carnal man might understand it.
Now comes a beautiful comparison in the style of chapter 5, with the comparisons between Adam and Christ. As the one, so also the other. Just as we were formerly slaves of uncleanness and iniquity, so we should now be slaves of righteousness.
Bondage to uncleanness and iniquity leads to iniquity (it only produces more iniquity and leads to death), and bondage to righteousness leads to holiness.
Where we make ourselves servants, place ourselves at the disposal of righteousness, there that leads to holiness. Making ourselves available is itself holiness. That holiness then goes further, works through.
Holiness = separation, but also dedication to the service of God. Through that service to the Lord we are indeed separated from the world. By entering the innermost sanctuary and drawing near to the throne of grace to serve Him who sits upon it (holiness), you go outside the camp and are thereby separated -sanctified) from the world.
“Sanctify unto me the sons of Aaron.” Thereby those sons did not become different people, but received a task and were consecrated to the service of God.
The Holy Ghost said in Antioch to certain prophets and teachers: “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” -Acts 13:2. They were specifically separated and consecrated for the service of God. And they did so, for they went on missionary journeys. That you must leave certain things behind for that is true (separation), but that is secondary. It is about dedication to...We should therefore make ourselves servants of righteousness (that is already holiness), and the result of that is holiness. That is a further consecration to the service of God, also in the practice of your life.

Romans 6:20
For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.
To put it the other way round. We did not serve righteousness. We were not slaves of that.

Romans 6:21
What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.
Count your profit. That yielded nothing. Well, it did yield something—namely death. The end, the goal of being free from bondage to unrighteousness is death. Serving sin yields death. Not at the end of the journey, but already in this life.

Romans 6:22
But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.
Now the end, the goal, is everlasting life, opposite the death of the previous verse. Here too it is not about the end of the journey, but about the situation during the journey. About the situation in our life, then. For we had already received everlasting life when we came to faith. The intention is that this everlasting life should now already be lived. Thereby we come back to the present work of Christ. Just as He, who died unto sin once for all, but that He lives, lives unto God. That is not in the future, but now. Just as He was raised to the glory of the Father. That new life is called in verse 22 everlasting life. It is therefore about our present life.
If we serve God, then the fruit of that in this life is holiness. We should in this life serve the Lord more and more and be changed more and more by the renewing of our mind. Thereby that everlasting life is also actually lived.
We find a parallel to verses 21 and 22 in Romans 7:5–6:
For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.
But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.
In short, we have been set free from bondage to sin and made servants to God, that we might bear fruit, with as fruit our holiness, unto everlasting life, that that everlasting life might now be lived. That is also the drift of the last verse of chapter 6.

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
This is not about our having lived in sin up to now and therefore now coming to faith, whereby God would give us eternal life as a gift of grace. It is not about whether a man is born again or not, but about the practice of the life of a born-again man.
A born-again person can remain in sin (verse 1) and can continue to serve sin (verse 15), but the result of that is death, verse 23 summarises.
The wages of sin, the pay of sin, is death in our everyday life. Nothing here is lasting. It all means nothing, because it leads nowhere. You can indeed continue to serve sin, that grace may abound, but the result of that is the working of death.
Opposite that stands that the gift of God is eternal life. But we already have that. The point is that this eternal life should also be lived. We have received eternal life, for we have been raised with Christ -Romans 6:4, but we should in the practice of our life walk in newness of life. God also gives us that. God gives us that life once, but He also gives us that life to live. It is nice when a child is born and lies in the cradle, but that is not the

purpose of its life. The purpose is that a child should grow up and become a human being. A child is a larva, and the intention is that it should then become a human being. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation -1 Peter 2:2. That is the intention. That life should be lived. For that it must be fed, but afterwards it goes by itself. Then it comes to development of its own accord. The problem is that often this new life has indeed been received, but is then not fed and therefore does not come to development. When children of God receive spiritual food, they start doing all sorts of things. Then they actually start living actively. That is usually not taken kindly by the world, but that is another story.
How all that works is discussed further on in the epistle. In the first place we at any rate present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. After that the Lord will do something, for it is His life. That begins with change of thinking. Before that we also thought, but that was the weakness of our carnal mind. Therefore that thinking must also be changed. Thinking = life. Life = experience. It is first of all about thinking. That is developed by taking in information. Then it is fed with something. We should be fed with the Word of God. That is why Paul does not immediately go into these things, but first gives some feeding.
Verse 23 is therefore about born-again people who have the option to actually live that new life. They can choose to continue serving sin and therefore unrighteousness. That means their life in practice does not change. In practice the working of death still continues. They remain slaves of corruption. They have indeed received eternal life, but nothing is done with it. They do not lose that life either, but the intention is that they should also live that life. He cannot lose that life either; that is why it is called eternal life.
You should become aware of who you are. Namely a child of God and thereby a servant. A child is anyway a servant, for a child differs in nothing from a servant, and therefore we as children of God should serve God. How? Not under the law, but in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter = law. We should serve righteousness, with as the basis of Christian ethics grace, which we receive and which we impart. For we have received it freely and therefore we should give it freely. That is the ruling principle in our lives.
The gift of God is eternal life. The wages of sin is the working of death, but the gift of God is eternal life to be lived. Paul says: “By grace is given unto me to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” That grace consisted not only in forgiveness of sins, nor only in receiving new life, but also in being able and permitted to live that life.
Hebrews 12:28
Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.
“May” = can and may.
Through grace we can and may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. It will be clear that this is not a verse that encourages us to come to God, but an invitation also to live from faith. Let us who are born again and have received grace hold fast that grace. Through that grace we may and can serve God acceptably. If we do not do that, well, God is a consuming fire. That is a warning that our lives will pass through judgment. All that we have done through the old man will be burned up. That is in itself a hopeful thought, for that was all old man and nothing to be proud of. That all had to do

with the working of death and corruption. But through that fire gold, silver, and precious stones will be revealed. Yes, and if those are not there, then not much remains of that eternal life. Gold, silver, and precious stones are the result of our life as children of God.
People say the way to salvation is difficult. We should therefore strive to enter. If you die at the end of your life in the hope of eternal life, then you have still reached your goal. But you had already reached that goal when you came to faith. If the goal has already been reached, what then must you do with the rest of your life? Wait and be bored to death? The point is precisely that you should seek and find the Lord early, for He has promised that—not to be saved one day, but to be saved immediately and to live that life in this life. The rest of our life we should not live according to the will of the Gentiles, but the will of God.
1 Peter 4:1–2
Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;
That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.
We can, but we should also live according to the will of God. Although still in the flesh, yet precisely in the flesh. We should present that flesh as instruments of righteousness or a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.
1 Peter 4:3
For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries
We have been delivered from that. We should now serve righteousness and serve God acceptably and walk accordingly. We should be changed in our thinking and prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, in order then naturally to carry out that will, whatever that will may be—for it is different for each of us.
We are members of one body, yet different members of one and the same body.
Nevertheless, that eternal life should be lived. That is the drift of Romans 6:23.
If you want to go on serving sin—very well, grace is much more abundant. All that is possible, but if you enjoy living like that, with the working of death in your practical life, then it is not very profitable. The grace of God is far greater. He has precisely delivered us from this futility and emptiness so that our lives might be filled.
That filling is indeed the meaning of sanctification. The Lord said: “Sanctify unto me the sons of Aaron, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office” - Exodus 28:41, but the thought of filling their hands is clear in the consecration: “and thou shalt consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office”). Not so that they might be paid—that too—but so that they might have something to do. When your hands are full, your life is full. People are earthen vessels and they should be filled with something so that their lives might have content.
The privilege of the believer is that he can be filled with the Word of God. The result of that will be that first he will have a full mouth (speaking) and second he will have full hands, so that he has something to do. A man finds his happiness, his satisfaction, in what he does. Preferably something meaningful. But even if it is not so meaningful, he still has something to do.
The gift of God’s grace is that He fills our hands. It is therefore the gift of God’s grace that we have received eternal life, but above all that we should be able to live that eternal

life. That gives us peace and joy. That also gives us hope, for it makes us look forward to the future, when glory will be revealed to us, our reward of recompense.

Chapter 7
The Christian Free from the Law

Romans 7:1
Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?
Now you immediately know what the rest is about. Man has died and no longer lives under the law. The argument that now follows is fundamentally the same as that set out in the previous chapter. The idea is simply that One died for all and therefore all died - 2 Corinthians 5:15. And insofar as we live, we should live the life of Christ. At any rate we no longer live under the law, for we have precisely been delivered from it.
That is not new, for it was already mentioned in the preceding chapters. Romans 6:14 says that sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace. In Romans 6 the point is not so much that we do not live under the law, but that we do not live under the dominion of sin. For we who have died to sin—shall we still live therein? In chapter 7 the question is whether we who have died to the law should still live under that law. We find the same arguments as in chapter 6, but here attention is also drawn to the specific nature, the character, of the law.
Know ye not that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? The law has its rules. When a man has died, he no longer lives under the law. Then he no longer needs anything and may do everything. Then he is free. If you have died, there is nothing to stop you driving through a red traffic light.
We are therefore reckoned to know that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. That is self-evident, but even self-evident things must sometimes be stated explicitly, because otherwise we probably do not think about them at all.
It says: “Know ye not, brethren…?” The question then is who those brethren are. The epistle is in any case written to believers. They are therefore evidently the brethren who understand the law. One might think they are Paul’s brethren according to the flesh, but on closer consideration those brethren never understood the law. Their relationship to the law is such that they try to live under the law. That living under the law by the Jews is described as indeed a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. If it is not according to knowledge, then they do not understand -Romans 10:2. In 1 Timothy 1:7 it says there are some who desire to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things they affirm. Those who live under the law evidently do not understand the law.
Back to Romans 7. I think the term “brethren” does not refer to those who understand the law, but to “know ye not.” It is said to those who are reckoned to know, and therefore to those who understand the law. Those are therefore by definition not the Jews. Paul speaks to those who understand the law, not to those who have the law, or to those who live under the law.
One may assume that brethren are those who understand the law. For we as born-again people have been delivered from the dominion of death, from the dominion of sin, and from the dominion of the law. That is why man no longer lives under the law.

Romans 7:2
For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.
A woman under her husband = a married woman. A married woman is bound to her living husband by the law. This too is rather superfluous to explain. These are self-evident things. There is therefore actually little to understand about the law. Yet those who live under it do not understand the law. Yet people continue to live under it, apparently because they are used to it and attached to it. They lay burdens on themselves and find their satisfaction in that.
It is not that Paul here uses human marriage as an illustration of life under the law. It is much stronger; here it is certainly not first of all about human marriage. In reality it is about the essence of the law, in which the woman is not merely one person, but the whole people who live under the law. It is certainly not the case that man's relationship to God is derived from human marriage. Insofar as we find the relationship between God and Israel in the Old Testament described as a marriage between a husband, namely Jehovah, and a wife, namely Israel, it is not the case that that marital relationship is derived from the example of an arbitrary human marriage. It is the other way round. The lower is not the norm for a marriage of the Lord Himself, but the marriage of the Lord is the norm for any human marriage. The higher is the example for the lower.
If you understand the law, you ought to know that marriage in the Old Testament is described as a marital relationship between the Husband, namely the Lord, and the wife, namely the people of Israel. The wife thereby receives a position under the Husband. That is not just a nice comparison, but this is very fully described in the Old Testament.
The essence of the exposition is that the marriage between the Lord and Israel is valid only as long as the Husband (in this case) lives. That Husband is therefore Jehovah, who at the time of the exodus from Egypt made a marriage with the people of Israel. And now it is said here, or at least suggested, that the Husband has died. The problem is that this does not fit in orthodox traditional church teachings. For Jehovah is God, and how can He now die? But in practice Jehovah is no one other than the Lord Jesus Christ, avant la lettre. When He became man, He received a human name, as every man who is born receives a name. He is now the Christ. He was not that when He appeared to Moses on Sinai, but He is that now. He is the same.
Jehovah Jesus died on the cross. But to avoid the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity, people are inclined to reason Romans 7 away. They then say that here it is about an arbitrary marriage, which is then applied to the Lord. But if you pay close attention, you read that the Husband, Jehovah, has died. Therefore a man who perhaps lived under the law and formed part of the Covenant of the law is no longer under the law, because the Husband has died.
Hebrews 9:16
For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.
In the Bible a covenant is not necessarily bilateral. It is an official deed. If it is unilateral, we call it a testament (a last will and testament). In the Bible such a unilateral testament is also called a covenant. Someone arranges something for the benefit of another. In both Hebrew and Greek the words testament and covenant are one and the same word.
For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator, for...

Hebrews 9:17
For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.
A testament means nothing as long as the testator is still alive. It then has no value at all. It is only legally valid after the testator has died.
Whose testament is the New Covenant? Who wrote it, laid it down, promised it? For it is a covenant of promise. Jehovah, the LORD God. He said: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD” -Jeremiah 31:31–32. It is therefore the announcement of the New Covenant, which would take the place of the Old Covenant. As appears from this, the Old Covenant is a covenant of law and is regarded as the marriage certificate of the marriage between God and the people of Israel.
The One who made the Old Covenant with Israel is the same as the One who promised the New Covenant. That promised New Covenant has no force as long as the Testator lives. It is only in force after the Testator has died. In other words, the One who in Jeremiah 31 says: “I will… make a new covenant…” has therefore died, for it is expressly said that we live under the New Covenant. That can only be if the Old Covenant has been ended by the death of the Testator. The New Covenant has force in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This means that where the New Covenant has come into operation after the death of the Testator, after the death of Jehovah, there has also come an end to the Old Covenant, that of the law. The Husband of the first Covenant has died, but He also left a testament behind, which came into force at the moment He died.
As said, people have problems with the death of Jehovah. They do not understand it, or do not want to understand it. As a result things are turned round. That also happens with the so-called Lord’s Supper. Incidentally, that has always been a problem throughout the centuries. One can guess why that is. The Lord Jesus said: “This is the blood of the new testament.” People did not understand what He meant by that, because they do not understand that whole Testament at all.
Especially in circles where the Lord’s Supper weighs heavily, people say there is only one text in the Bible that explains the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, but then they add that the meaning you find there deviates from what you find elsewhere in the Bible about it. That is of course nonsense. They were not satisfied with the explanation in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11.1 Corinthians 10:15–17
I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.
The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?
For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.
Here bread and wine are a picture of the church, as one bread and as one body. But if this is the only explanation, then that is also the meaning of the Lord’s Supper elsewhere in the Bible. This therefore means that bread and wine are not a picture of the death of the Lord Jesus, but of His present resurrection life and in particular of His life in His own, in the church. One bread is a picture of one body, namely the church. When

the Lord Jesus lifted the cup, He did not say that this was the blood of the Old Covenant, but of the New Covenant and therefore of the resurrection life. It is not even a picture of His resurrection, but of His resurrection life. Then 1 Corinthians 11:26 is also immediately explained:
1 Corinthians 11:26
For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.
What therefore do you proclaim at the Lord's Supper? The Lord's death. It does not say the Lord's suffering, nor the Lord's dying, but the Lord's death. You understand that dying is entering into death, but it is not about entering into death, but about death as such. One proclaims the death of Jehovah. Not so much His suffering and dying, but the fact that He is dead
.If the wine is a picture of the blood (of the life) of the New Covenant, then one proclaims that the Testator has apparently died, for the New Covenant cannot apply if the One who made it has not first died. The Testator is at the same time the Testator, the Covenant-Maker, of the Old Covenant. This means that if the Lord, Jehovah therefore, has died, the New Covenant has come into force, but it also means at the same time that the Old Covenant is no longer in force, simply because the Husband has died. But He lives, does He not? Well, He lives again, but His death did have legal consequences. After those consequences had been applied, He rose from the dead. This does mean that the relationship between God and Israel, or between Christ and the church, is different from that in Old Testament times. That is set out here in Romans 7. The Husband has indeed died, and the wife, Israel, who lived under the Husband and was bound to the husband, is now loosed from the law of her Husband. At the moment we celebrate the Lord's Supper and thus express the fact that we live under the New Covenant, we proclaim the death of the Testator, of the One who perhaps once brought us under the law. We therefore also proclaim that we are no longer under the law, because Jehovah has died. Since then we live under grace, under that New Covenant. That is why God has made us able to be ministers of the New Covenant, not of the One who was raised from the dead. That is why we also speak of the blood of the New Testament, the life under the New Covenant.
That here in Romans 7 it is first of all about the relationship between the Lord and Israel I should like to show from a number of Scripture passages.
The history of Israel under the Old Covenant is the history of a marriage. We find first of all the time of betrothal mentioned, the engagement period.
Jeremiah 2:2
Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.
Strictly speaking, that is the time between the exodus from Egypt and the marriage, on the occasion of the giving of the law on Sinai. There is not much time between them, but it is described as the time of betrothal, the period of engagement.
After that follows the marriage itself, at the giving of the law on Sinai. The Lord said to Moses that he should read the law to the people and then God would hear from the people whether they agreed. Moses therefore read the law to Israel, after which he asked: "What is your answer to this?" Israel then said: "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." If only they had not said that.

Jeremiah 31:32
Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD;This is quoted in Hebrews 8:9.
Jeremiah 3:14
by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.
Hosea 1:2
The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.
Hosea had to marry a wife of whoredoms, just as the Lord was also married to a wife of whoredoms. These are hardly uplifting words, but they clearly indicate what the matter concerns.
Exodus 34:14–16
For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:
Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;
And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.
Exodus 19:8
And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.
Deuteronomy 5:27
Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.
This list is far from complete, but it makes sufficiently clear that what took place was a marriage between God and Israel, with all the consequences that entailed—for spouses are obliged to live together in the marital home -see Leviticus 25:3. The land of Canaan is that marital home, where the wife would dwell and the Lord in their midst. But to whom does the marital home belong? To the Husband - The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine—Leviticus 25:23; see also Isaiah 14:2; Jeremiah 11:15). To this day people ask whose the land is and who has the right to dwell in it. No one, therefore. The only one who could possibly qualify is the church, as the people of the Lord, but the Lord has appointed another dwelling for the church—a better country, that is, an heavenly one.
After that we have the history of the wife's whoredom, in which the wife is described as an adulteress and a harlot.
Exodus 34:14–17 —see above.
Ezekiel 16:25
Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.
And what follows in that chapter. Also the whole of Jeremiah 3.

From the Old Testament, and later also from Revelation, we know Jezebel. She was the wife of King Ahab.
Jezebel = untouched. This is usually translated positively. That she was fair of face, and the like. She appears therefore to have been a beautiful woman. But “untouched” means that although she was married to Ahab, she did not live in fellowship with him. Officially there was a marriage, but in practice not. With the solemnisation of a marriage a document is signed. Then the marriage is legal. After that the marriage must still be officially consummated. Even in the Roman Catholic Church it is so that if a marriage is not consummated, it can be declared invalid. That was therefore Jezebel’s position. She is a picture of Israel, which was indeed married to the Lord, but in which the marriage was not consummated. There was no fellowship, let alone conception, and therefore no fruitful marriage. The wife was barren, it is said. The Lord complains. He is indeed married to that wife, but otherwise nothing, for she will not have it. Nothing therefore came of that marriage. The consequence is that the marriage is dissolved. Strictly speaking, that divorce between the Lord and Israel applies officially only to the ten tribes of Israel. But that makes little difference. What matters is that this marriage does indeed end in divorce.
Isaiah 50:1
Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.
Here the Lord has already nothing more to do with Israel, for He has already sent her away with a bill of divorcement. He has no further obligations toward her, because Israel also failed to fulfil her obligations. One should therefore no longer call upon the Lord, for He does nothing more.
Deuteronomy 24:1–4
When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.
And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.
And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;
Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.
In the verses above you find the law of divorce. The description of it is clearly the description of the divorce between the Lord and Israel. After that the one thing and another is applied to man in general, but it is first of all about the Lord and Israel. If the husband has sent the wife away with a bill of divorcement, then he may not take her back afterwards. Once ended, then ended for ever. It does not come right again. So it is between the Lord and Israel—it does not come right again.
But would not the Lord yet make a marriage with Israel under the New Covenant? That is so, but that is not the restoration of the old, but it is something new.
Jeremiah 3:1
They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s,

shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.
Jeremiah 3:20
Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.
That is one side of the story. The other side of the story applies more specifically to the two tribes of Israel—namely that the marriage is ended by the death of the Husband. We find that again here in Romans 7. Bear in mind then that the ten tribes in practice never lived under the law; the two tribes did on occasion. To Judah it is said:
Isaiah 54:4
Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.
Israel is described as a widow. Then the Husband has therefore died.
After that there is mention of what we may conveniently call the restoration of the marriage, although in fact it concerns a new marriage.
Isaiah 54:5
For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
For thy Maker is thine husband = thy Husband. There is mention of a new marriage, but then of the Husband who has risen from the dead and is therefore for the law Another. The First has died. If He then appears again, He must first be re-registered in the population register and therefore has a new identity. That is also so in our regeneration. Thereby we have received from God a new identity, for we have become someone else. We are no longer in Adam, but in Christ.
Jeremiah 31:31–34
Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:
But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
The New Covenant will no longer be broken and cannot be ended any more and is moreover fruitful, because there is then indeed fellowship.
Ezekiel 16:60–63
Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.
Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.
And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD:

That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.
Hosea 2:18–19
And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.
And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.
A new marriage therefore, with all the consequences that entail.
Isaiah 62:4–5
Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.
For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.
Here therefore a new marriage is promised.
Revelation 19:6–10
And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.
And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.
And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.It will now be clear who that bride is. Of course much more could be said about it, but for the moment we are concerned with the main lines.
The Old Testament is therefore primarily the history of a complete marriage that went completely wrong, yet with the promise that a new marriage would be made. That new marriage is also described here in Romans 7. Let us return to it.

Romans 7:2
For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Romans 7:3
So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.
The Husband has died, and the wife is therefore now free from the Husband and free from the law of the Husband. She is now free to place herself under another Husband

and under another law. The intention is that she should become the wife of Another—namely of Him who has been raised from the dead.

Romans 7:4
Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.
That Other is indeed the same Person, yet not the same, for He who has been raised from the dead is the Surety and Mediator of the New Covenant. He is the Firstborn of a new creation. One should be joined to Him.
The same applies to us. As Gentiles we were never under the law anyway, yet we too should be joined to Him who has been raised from the dead. The church is therefore also described as the wife of Christ. That implies a marriage relationship. In our case, admittedly, not after the old has been ended, but it is indeed about something new. As believers we live in fellowship with the Lord, in a fruitful relationship. Therefore we should bring forth fruit unto God.
Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law. For we have also died to sin. That was what the previous chapter was about. So not only to sin, but also to the law -Romans 6:14. That aspect is mentioned again separately here, but it is an addition to chapter 6.
We have died—to sin, but also to the law. We have died to the law by the body of Christ. We are members of the body of Christ, and He is the One who has died to the law. Since therefore we have part in Him, we have died to the law. We have part in the bread and the cup and therefore in the body of Christ. That is why we proclaim the Lord's death and thereby the end of the dominion of the law. That stands here. Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.
That we should be married to Another. But are we not already? That is true. A marriage has taken place, but the question is whether this is also true in practice. Jezebel was married to Ahab. Of course she was, but that marriage was not consummated. In practice, therefore, it was not so.
Romans 6–8 speak about the practical position of believers. The question is whether we in practice live in fellowship with that Other, with Him who has risen from the dead. We are officially joined to Him, but is that also true in the practice of our life? All New Testament epistles have no other subject than this. They are written to believers who are called to draw the consequences from their position. We are the Lord's possession, and the question is whether we also live in fellowship with Him. We stand under Christ, for He is the Head of the church, but do we then indeed serve the Head? We read that we are saints in Christ Jesus and that for that reason we should become saints. Are we not that yet? Yes, officially yes, but the question is whether we are so in practice.
In 2 Corinthians 3 it says that God has made us able to be ministers of the New Covenant, but the point of that statement is that we are called to carry out that ministry in practice. We have officially been made able to serve Him, but do we then actually serve Him? Paul says that he does, and calls us to follow his example (2 Corinthians 3–5). Those chapters are in fact the summary of both epistles to the Corinthians. They knew very well that they were children of God, but in the practice of their life they simply lived in the world and according to the elementary principles of the world. They had been made able to serve the Lord, but made no use of that ability.

So it is here in Romans 7. We have died to the law by the body of Christ and therefore form part of that new humanity of which Christ is the Head, but in the practice of our life we should also live in fellowship with Him, consummate the marriage, that we might bring forth fruit unto God.
If you count carefully, you have three phases in this verse:

- We are members of the body of Christ. We are joined to Him in what may be called a marriage;
- That marriage should also be consummated, so that in the practice of our life we should become the wife of Him who has risen from the dead.
- The result of that is that we should bring forth fruit unto God. The wife should bear fruit for the husband, so that it would be a fruitful marriage.

The fruit of the Spirit is... Galatians 5:22.
The kingdom of God is given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof (Matthew 21:43.
Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance - Matthew 3:8.
We have been raised with Christ, that we should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4.
We should live unto God - Romans 6:10.
We should be alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord -Romans 6:11.
What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? - Romans 6:21.
The life of Christ in us is regarded as conception, as impregnation, and from that fruit should be borne for the husband, as the wife bears fruit for the husband. At least that used to be so.
Nowadays people think very differently about it.

Romans 7:5
For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.
In the preceding section it was explained that the Christian is free from the law. In the following section it is explained why this is so. Not by what means, but why. We had not only died to sin, but also to the law. We have died to the law under which we (the Jews) were kept in custody. But now we do not serve any longer in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. What follows is...

Romans 7:7
What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.
Is the law then a mistake? Is there then something wrong, crooked about the law? Then Paul explains how it works and why we had to be delivered from the law. Not because there was anything wrong with the law, but because there was something wrong with us. What use is a bicycle if you have no legs? What use is a pair of glasses if you are stone blind? There is nothing wrong with the glasses, but if you have no eyes, you can do nothing with them.
Is the law sin? God forbid. Absolutely not. There is nothing wrong with the law. Through the law you can be taught. You can learn much from it, but in the practice of life it is of no use. Through glasses you can see better, but if you have no eyes, you can do nothing with them.

Without the law you would not know sin. For by the law is the knowledge of sin - Romans 3:20. That is of no great use to you. At best you learn through the law to know yourself, or your misery. But why should I know my misery from the law of God? To know your misery from the experience of your own life is bad enough. You had better not know it. Moreover, what use is it if someone comes and lists your misery for you? If you find out for yourself, that is soon enough. Nevertheless, by the law is the knowledge of sin. Paul gives an example. How can you know what lust is if the law had not said: Thou shalt not covet? That is one of the Ten Commandments.
James says that a man cannot be tempted unless it is by his own desire. The desire is there and may be aroused, activated, by the tempter. “But,” says James, “it lies not so much with the tempter, but with man himself, who is tempted by his own desire.” You can blame the devil, but it lies with yourself. There are even people who claim they are tempted by God, but the Bible says God tempts no one. It lies with your own desire.
In short, is the law in itself sin? No, absolutely not. Through the law we come to know sin, but...

Romans 7:8
But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.
The commandment = the law.
Wrought = worked, aroused.
What stands here therefore is that the law arouses desire.
The law says: “Thou shalt not do this or that,” and then you think: “Hey, so I can do this or that.” The law puts ideas into your head and arouses desires in you. The law activates sin.
Sin took occasion by the commandment = sin found an opportunity in the commandment. Whatever the law forbids only puts the idea into man’s head. It could therefore be done, for if it could not be done, it would not be forbidden.
Thou shalt not covet what belongs to thy neighbour. Perhaps you did not do that either, but you may then wonder what there is to covet about your neighbour. This may also immediately explain why Paul in verse 7 uses such a rather trivial example. Every sin arises from desire. You want something and do something. Thereby you have committed a sin. But the Bible says that the desire in itself is already sin. Sin is therefore not primarily the doing of sinful acts, but first of all thinking sinful thoughts. That is where it already goes wrong, and when it goes wrong, it is sin. That is after all the same word. Many legalistic people have invented that you cannot in any case keep the law with your thoughts. On the contrary, the law arouses sinful thoughts. And so we have devised a compromise. Thoughts are duty-free. You can therefore think it, as long as you do not do it. The Bible says it is actually the other way round, for man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Paul says in Galatians 6 that those who want to live under the law do so to make a fair show in the flesh. Living under the law has only an outward effect toward man, toward one’s fellow man. It is outward appearance. Inwardly the law has only a negative effect. The law arouses sin. Desire, when it has conceived, brings forth sin.
James 1:13–15
Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.
Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Desire, sin, death.

Romans 7:8
But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.
Desire brings forth sin.
Now comes an explanation: for without the law sin was dead.
Dead in the normal sense of the term means there is no communication, there is no fellowship. If sin is dead, then you have no knowledge of sin, because sin does not make itself known. You have no communication with it.
That is the theme already set out in chapter 5, where it says that sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans 5:13. In other words, without law one does not come to knowledge of the sinful nature of man. There are two ways by which you come to know the sinful nature. First, through death. That is the greatest failure there is. And because death is very natural, there is therefore a failing nature, a sinful nature. Death does not belong to life; it is the opposite of life. Life ends in death, and if death is a natural phenomenon, then there is something wrong with nature. And therefore there is a sinful nature. The other way is through the law. Lay a law upon man and you will see that he not only cannot keep it, but begins to transgress that law all the more eagerly. Things he did not naturally do before, he does as soon as you forbid him to do them. In puberty that old nature is most active. It still has to be ordered by norms and values. People are then busy with that, but in ordering there arises great chaos. That is the opportunity to try it out. Forbid them something they never do. The chance is great that they will then do it. The law activates sin and demonstrates sin, because nature resists that law. You naturally learn that you must be delivered from the law. That is set out here. Not because there is anything wrong with the law—the law is good—but it has a wrong effect on man, who is a sinner, who comes short.
Without the law sin was dead = without the law you would have no knowledge of sin, except through death. But without law sin does not reveal itself. As long as you still remain alive, there is nothing wrong.

Romans 7:9
For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.
This is a difficult verse, because Paul does not fully say what he is talking about. If it is a testimony of himself before his conversion, that is not right, for we all know that Paul before his conversion lived fiercely under the law. If you look for a period in him when he lived without the law, then it must have been after his conversion, when he was delivered from the law. But then one suddenly has problems with what comes after.
But when the commandment came… You would think the law then suddenly came back into Paul's life, and thereby sin was revived in him through the law, although he goes on to say that he died.

How exactly it is is not clear. Perhaps he simply uses it as an example and as an example says that when he was again confronted with the law, sin became alive again in him.
In any case this situation often applies to Gentiles who come to faith. Without the law I once lived. That applies to many who have come to conversion. They lived without God and commandment. Then they came to faith and thought they now suddenly had to live under the law. That is a crooked idea. Thereby people apparently think that the Christian faith is a religion. There is indeed a religion called Christianity, but it is not biblical. No religion is biblical. We live by faith, and that is not under law, for law is religion.
And without the law I once lived; but when the commandment came... Before you came to faith you lived without the law, and now that you have come to faith you are placed under the law.
So sin revived. This implies that the one used here as an example had first died to sin. If you have first died to sin and are then placed under a law, that is inconsistent, for if you have died to sin, then you have also died to the law. And a believer is not reckoned to live under the law. If he does, then sin, for which he had died, becomes alive again. Then that sin becomes active again. That is precisely the opposite of how it should be. We have nothing more to do with either sin or the law. If the law is then wrongly introduced again—for example out of gratitude—then the believer's sin is also activated. Instead of our being delivered from sin and no longer remembering our sins—because the Lord does not either—sin is precisely remembered. An average church service begins with the reading of the law, so that all present suddenly feel sinners again. And because they feel sinners, however believing they often are, they are not sure of their salvation. That is logical too, for if you are saved, then you are delivered from sin. But if you are read the law, then you become aware of sin at the very least, not to mention the practical effect of it. It is truly 100% unbiblical and contrary to the gospel. The gospel is the glad tidings that we are delivered from the law, from the whole law. It is then said that we must have rules after all. That is true enough. And we do have rules, principles of life, but that is not the law, but grace. That is not the Old Covenant, but the New Covenant. That is not condemnation under the law, but life from the riches of grace, or life under the dominion of grace. The teaching that says we do not live under the New Covenant in these days is deadly. If we do not live under the New Covenant and also not under the Old, from which we have been delivered, then we are left to our own devices. Then nothing reigns over us. Then you can indeed say that grace reigns, but that has then lost its meaning. The meaning of that concept is given in the principles of that New Covenant.
It is about being thoroughly convinced that we are delivered from sin and law, for if you are not delivered from the law, then you are also not delivered from sin, or from guilt, or at least from guilt feelings.
In any case. Paul says that when that commandment comes again, sin becomes alive through it. "But," he says, "yet I died." That is again the positive side of the story. However active sin may be in us, it makes no difference to us, for we have died to the law and to sin. From God's standpoint. Whether we sin much or little makes no difference, because we live under the dominion of grace, from God's standpoint. But we ourselves will have great problems with it. The Lord not so much. But we do. It causes us problems, because we are busy with things we know we should not do. Things we hoped to be delivered from and hoped the Lord would help us in our struggle against them, so that we could show a fair face to ourselves and to others. We human beings

think that important, but for God it plays no role at all, for we have died to the law and to sin. Moreover God said: “I will not remember your sins any more.” But if we allow ourselves to be placed under the law, then we are promptly busy remembering our sins. That is precisely what we should not do. That is why we had to be delivered from the law.

Romans 7:10
And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.
The law says: “Do this and you will live.” You just get nothing from it, for the Bible says no one can do that. Nevertheless “do this and you will live.” The law intends to give life, at least to maintain life. But precisely that same commandment, which was unto life, I found to be unto death. The law says that if you transgress the law, you are guilty of death. Then you have no right to life. If therefore you transgress the law, the law is not unto life, but unto death. That is why the law is called a ministration of death. The law condemns man. How else does it come about that so many Christians carry such heavy guilt feelings with them? Because they have allowed themselves to be placed under the law. There are quite a few theological paths that lead to the same result. A life under the Mosaic law, or under the rules of the local church—it makes no difference; they are the same prescriptions. They undoubtedly serve to keep the beloved believers under pressure, so that they remain aware that they are sinners and therefore must keep their mouths shut. The Pharisees thought the same of the common people. They were just ordinary sinners, so what could they tell them? Think of the man born blind: “Thou wast altogether born in sins; what wouldst thou say?” And so church members are given guilt complexes. And if you dare to say that God has put away all our sins, regardless of what they consisted in, then they say that is universal reconciliation. That is a recognised heresy and then you are in trouble. That is not universal reconciliation, but it is used to silence everyone. Universal reconciliation teaches that all people will be saved. Of course we do not believe that, but we do believe that God has put away all our sins. He will in no way, in no manner whatever, remember our sins ffJeremiah 31; Hebrews 8. From that we live, under the New Covenant, where sins play no role at all. Those are the principles of a new creation, a new humanity with a new nature. Peter calls that the divine nature. For man that is rather far-fetched, but we do not reach for it either; God has given it to us.
We, who have died and risen with Christ and received eternal life, would naturally not live under a ministration of death.1 Timothy 1:5–7
Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:
From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;
Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.
To the Galatians he says: “Who hath bewitched you?” It is incomprehensible that people allow themselves to be placed under the law again. Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? That cannot be the intention.

Romans 7:11
For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.
The expression from verse 8 is here literally repeated. It is hammered in. First commandment; from that sin proceeds, and from that proceeds the ultimate failure,

death. So the law is a ministration of death, although there is nothing wrong with the law itself.

Romans 7:12
Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.
The fault does not lie there. It lies with man, who cannot bear the yoke of the law. Man reacts to the law as to an excessive reaction to an allergy. It may be well-intentioned, but it has a wrong effect.
Galatians 3:19
Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.
In the preceding section it was set out that salvation does not come from the law, but from the promises to Abraham, 430 years earlier. The law came 430 years after the promise. It came alongside and adds nothing to it. The promises to Abraham remained, and the coming of the New Covenant is the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham. The law does speak about that, but contributes nothing to it.If the law does not bring salvation, what then is the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions.
“For the sake of” = in favour of.

Because of transgressions is not for the sake of righteousness. The law was not given alongside the promise to man to produce righteousness, but to produce unrighteousness, to produce transgressions. But is the law not there to reduce transgressions? We humans may think so, but the problem with human thinking is that it assumes man is good in himself, or at least that there is something good somewhere in man. Man believes in the good in man. That is precisely the opposite of what the Bible says about it. Insofar as there may perhaps be something good in man, that can only be the Word of God, or the Spirit of God, or the life of God, but you find that only in born-again people who allow themselves to be filled with the Word of Christ, or with the Holy Spirit. In the natural man, however, there is nothing good. How do we know that? From the law. Not because the law teaches that, although it does, but we know it because a whole people was placed under the law to demonstrate to the whole world what becomes of that people under the law. Nothing came of it at all. The people even became unbelieving. The astonishing thing about Israel is that it is delivered from Egypt by great signs and wonders, so that there could be no doubt that they had the Lord on their side, but they only came to murmuring. They receive the law and promptly become disobedient. So it went then and so it goes still. They became unbelieving and trusted

above all in themselves, in their own works, in their own ability and knowledge, but nothing comes of that.
When the Lord makes Himself known, they say: “We will not have this man to reign over us.”
What then is the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions, for the law causes transgressions to increase.
The law was added until the Seed should come. That is to say, until the promises to Abraham had been fulfilled. Until that time Israel was placed under the law.
1 Corinthians 15:56
The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
The sting is a stick with a sharp point on it, which they stick into the hindquarters of an ox to urge the beast into action. A goad. From that comes the expression “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (futile resistance; you do not hurt the goad, but yourself). To kick against the goads.
A goad is a kind of driving force, like stimuli transmitted from the brain to the muscles. The sting of death is sin. Death is driven by sin. Sin is the goad that activates death. Then once more:
And the strength of sin is the law. The law activates sin and sin activates death. That is why we had to be delivered from the law.
It is deeply regrettable that so-called evangelical Christians go that way. They begin with a little law and it becomes a great deal of law and they simply lose the glad tidings. Prescriptions, laws, and rules are called practical Christianity, but that is not Christianity. That is only combating sin, unrighteousness, and the like. But through living under the law it precisely increases.

Romans 7:18
For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.
In the flesh, in the old man, no good thing dwells. The willing is indeed present with him, but he cannot manage to do the good. That is the reality.

Romans 7:19
For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
That is exactly the same as what was said in verse 15. It is the conflict in the life of a believer. This is about the life of a child of God. It is the conflict between the old man and the new man. What a believer therefore needs to learn is to distance himself from himself. That is not easy. Our life with the Lord exists despite how we are, despite how we live, and despite what we do. That is the starting point. That is not the last word, however, for we are only in chapter 7 of 16.
There is always this conflict in a child of God, of which John says that he has two natures: the old man, for that is still there, and the new man. The Bible teaches that man is an empty vessel. That vessel is empty. His whole existence is empty, vain. It is pointless to go looking for yourself, for you will not find it. If you must derive your identity from what you do, you will be disappointed.
Man should be filled with the Word of God, so that it is no longer empty and vain, but filled. Then you become something, but this means that Christ has become our identity. Then you can say: “For to me to live is Christ.”

Who am I? Moses asked the Lord: “Who art Thou?” Then the Lord had to answer the question of who He was, and He said: “I AM.” We can become something, but only if we are filled with Him, with His life. Then He becomes our ego, our “I.” That ego is not subject to the law or earthly principles, or carnal mind, human philosophy or theology, or anything else.
Paul says in this connection in Galatians 2:
Galatians 2:19–20
For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.
I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
Who am I? I am crucified with Christ. Who or what am I then? Dead. And I live. What am I then? Alive. Am I now dead or alive? Both. We are dead to the old man and alive unto God in Christ and therefore alive to the new man. The only complication is that this new life has been planted in this old body, which serves as an instrument for the new life in us. We know no man any longer after the flesh, for we are reckoned to have died to the old man. We are new creations, for we are in Christ. Our body is not a new creation, and our old man is still active, but we no longer acknowledge it. Well, we know it is there, but we say that is the sin that dwells in us. We have distanced ourselves from it.“Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” is a call to distance ourselves from our old sinful nature.
I am crucified with Christ, and I live. Those two “I”s are not the same. No longer I, but Christ lives in me. Where you would expect the word “I,” suddenly Christ stands. Not I live, but Christ lives in me. Christ lives in my old man, in this old body, and that Christ is my “I.” That is why we as believers also receive a new name. That effectively means a new identity.
And the life which I now live in the flesh = insofar as I now live in the flesh. The new life has taken place in this old human body.
And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith (by the faithfulness) of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
Who am I and from what do I derive my identity? We as children of God are not just ordinary natural people, ordinary Adamites, with a modification, an adjustment, or a slight improvement afterwards—not a man who has adopted a set of norms and values and thereby become a better man. That is how it is preached from the pulpit. How do you become a better man?
But we have received another identity. That new identity we should not only reckon for ourselves, but also for others.
2 Corinthians 5:17
Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
Be still, wait, everything will become new. No, everything has become new, and we too have become new. And therefore we know no man any longer after the flesh. We know, but we do not acknowledge. We have no fellowship with it any more. Our fellowship as believers is not on the basis of the flesh, but on the basis that we as children of God have become new creatures in Christ and have become partakers of the life of Christ. We should learn to see ourselves as Christ sees us, and He says that we are a new creation in Him.

On that ground He can also say that He will in no way remember our transgressions. The problem we have is that we ourselves remember our sins, in various ways. For example, by allowing ourselves to be placed under the law. We also remember our sins when we think we must confess our sins to the Lord daily. Then you are busy remembering your sins. There are even people who write down the sins they have committed during the day so that they can confess them to the Lord in prayer in the evening. Deeply tragic! That falls into the category of good intentions. You become deeply unhappy from it. The Lord forgives them and remembers them no more, but you yourself are busy remembering them.

It is not forbidden to confess your sins to the Lord, but the Bible says it is not good to remember your sins. We no longer ask for forgiveness, but we thank Him because He has forgiven our sins and remembers them no more. God looks upon us in Christ; we should do the same. Our relationship with our High Priest is not based on what we have done and certainly not on what we have left undone. It really makes no difference to Him.

We do wrong things on earth, or at least unwise things, and have problems with them. They are imputed to us or not. In any case, a lot can go wrong. Those things happen to us all, but it does not make us different before God. He reckons us perfect in Christ, and as far as our practical Christian life is concerned, it is not about whether we sin or do not sin, let alone whether we keep the law or not, but whether we serve Him. That is not the same as combating sin in our life. With the latter we serve ourselves, to gain a higher sense of self-worth. There is even a movement that teaches that a believer can come so far that he no longer sins at all. And then? What difference does it make? He was already dead. Whether a dead man sins much or little makes no difference. He remains dead. Where sin does not occur in that divine nature, combating sin in our life does not serve God. God has long since solved that problem. And insofar as you say that you still sin and want to get rid of it—well, take courage. Sooner or later you will die, and then you are free of it. Hopefully the rapture of the church takes place even sooner, and then we are free of it too. That is called the redemption of our body.

There is still something from which we must be delivered, but in practice it plays no role at all for God. Just who I am. You should come to the Lord as you are, without first smartening yourself up. And you would not dream of doing that later either. The Bible teaches that Christ cleanses us. Perhaps not quickly or thoroughly enough by our standards, but you would not venture to apply your own standards. He does it. It is His work, His high-priestly work, which He does for the church. He gave Himself for us, as we also read just now in Galatians 2:20. He gave Himself for us so that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, by the washing of water by the word. If therefore you want to get rid of your sin problem, you should let yourself be cleansed by the Word of God. If you do not deal with that Word, if you do not take that Word in, you are not cleansed in the practice of your life and you go around with your guilt feelings. The curse of Christianity is that people apply human philosophy to it, at the expense of the Bible. They leave the Bible out of consideration and say that once you have come to faith you must do something for the Lord. And what could you do better for the Lord than live under the law? You do that, of course, out of gratitude. That is so utterly unbiblical! One should out of gratitude live under the New Covenant and present one's life a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto

God, and therefore present oneself with boldness at the throne of grace, to serve as a priest in the service of the High Priest of the New Covenant.

Romans 7:20 - 25
Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
He agrees with it and subtracts nothing from it.
But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
In my body things go wrong. From that we must still be delivered.
O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
Who shall deliver me from this body in which death reigns? It is a rhetorical question, for the answer is...
I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 7:26
[This verse does not exist in the; the chapter ends at verse 25.]
This is the summary of the whole chapter. With the flesh I serve the law of sin. There is no escaping that. You must know the difference between the working of sin (from that we are not delivered) and the dominion of sin (from that we are delivered). The working of sin is there, but it is not the all-dominating working in us, for the dominating power in us is not sin, but the Spirit. Despite the fact that sin works in us, we can serve the Lord. We have redemption and forgiveness according to the riches of God's grace and have become priests after the order of Melchisedec and have part in a heavenly people, a heavenly citizenship, and a heavenly inheritance, and whatever else it may be. What about sin? It is still there, but it no longer reigns.
The same naturally applies to death. Death is still there, but it no longer reigns. We may perhaps die physically, but we do not come into the realm of the dead, for we are assured that neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. That has nothing to do with our practical life. Whatever happens, we are children of God and safe with Him. We should make our bodies available, as far as lies in us, to serve Him and His righteousness in newness of spirit. That is the ultimate outworking of the will of God. In our practical life the law is not the standard, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do. It is the working of Christ in us. To that we should commit ourselves, instead of committing ourselves to simple human philosophy. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom. We need the indwelling of the Word of Christ.

Chapter 8
The Spirit of Adoption

Romans 8:1
There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
There is therefore now no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

Therefore now = referring back to what has gone before, concluding from what has gone before. There it was set out that we have died, been buried, and risen with Christ; that we are justified by the resurrection of Christ; that, being justified, we have peace with God.
And therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Now = you can read it as summing up, but also that it is not so much about the future, but about the present. That evidently also concerns it, although people are generally not used to reading the verse in that way too.
People are accustomed to think of condemnation as eternal condemnation.
Condemnation = condemnation;
Justification = acquittal.
Justification and condemnation are therefore opposite concepts. In general people are only concerned about a possible eternal judgment and therefore read this as meaning that a believer will not be judged in the future. That is also true, but that is not what stands here.
Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
That people usually do not read it that way probably comes from the fact that they generally have no idea what that possible condemnation in the present could or should consist of. People have often already lost the thread here and because they simply read over statements that concern condemnation in the present.
You should link the verse back to Romans 1:18. The wrath of God and thereby the judgment of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. In other words, the whole world is under that wrath of God and is therefore condemned and is being condemned in this present time.
In John 3:18 it says that he who believes on Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It is about God's judgment on mankind in this present time. That judgment is that God has let the world go and left it in darkness. Where the world today walks in darkness and ignorance (God more or less sees to that), these things do not apply to children of God, for we should walk in the light, for the gospel of the glory of Christ will enlighten our hearts - 2 Corinthians 4:4. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
We therefore do not walk in darkness, but in the light. We have not been let go by God, but walk in fellowship with the Lord.
Romans 5 says that we are justified by faith and have peace with God. He died for us while we were yet sinners, but now that we are reconciled to God, He also does the one thing and another for, in, and through us. We have passed from death unto life. We have been translated from darkness into His marvellous light. We have been delivered from this present evil age and placed in the age to come. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We no longer live under the dominion of sin, nor any longer under the dominion of the law, but we now live under the leading of the Holy Spirit. That is the transition from the previous chapters to chapter 8. No longer under law and sin. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; they now live under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

If you live under the dominion of sin, you live under the judgment of it; if you live under the dominion of the law, you live under the judgment of it. If you are a mortal man, you also live under the dominion of death. But the previous chapters have set out that we have been delivered from that, and in summary we can say that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Those are those who have been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death and in the likeness of His resurrection. Those who are in Christ Jesus have part in the resurrection life of Christ and are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

Romans 8:2
For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
Hebrews 4:16
Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
Colossians 3:1–3
If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
The doctrine of election is often presented in such a way that people say: “If I am elect, then God will arrange everything Himself,” and in that way they shift their own responsibility aside.
The evangelical variant of this is that we are elect on the basis of faith, and since then we let ourselves be led by the Lord in every step we take. So the responsibility for our own life also lies with the Lord. After that come the big problems: Why does the Lord do this in my life? And why does He not do that in my life? Those are very unfair questions, for the question ought to be: “Why do I not do this, and why do I not do that?” In that way responsibility is shifted back onto the Lord. Israel did the same in the past. But God places the responsibility with man, who should make his choice and live from it. For us in New Testament times this means that we who are believers have received eternal life and therefore the Holy Spirit, and we should therefore live according to the Spirit. Not striving towards it, but walking in accordance with that Spirit. If that is so, then we walk in the light with Jesus; the dark valley lies behind me.
How have we been delivered from this condemnation in Romans 8:1 ? The most obvious answer is through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but that is not the correct answer. If it were about a future judgment, that would indeed be true. For He has borne our sins and has been raised for our justification. But it is about God’s present judgment. How are you delivered from that? How are we in practice, in our everyday life, delivered from that present judgment, from the darkness of this world? The answer stands in the next verse…Romans 8:2
For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
“For” = a causal conjunction. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.
It is about practical things. How is it that we are delivered from darkness and ignorance?

The saving grace of God has appeared to all men and teaches us... We are taught by the saving grace of God. The opposite of this does not occur anywhere in the Bible—namely that the saving law of God has appeared to all men and teaches us. The saving law of God has not appeared to all men, does not teach us, and moreover is not saving. That is nowhere stated. We are commended to the word of His grace - Acts 20:32. Grace should teach us. Where “law” most often refers to the Old Covenant, there “grace” refers to the New Covenant. That is why the New Covenant is also called the Covenant of Grace.
The law of the Spirit of life;
The law of sin and death.
It will be clear that the law of sin and death is the designation of the Old Covenant, for the law is a ministration of death and the law causes sin to reign. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law. If we live under the law, we must ask ourselves at every point whether something is sin or not. Then sin dominates our life. But we have been delivered from the Old Covenant, which is a ministration of sin and thereby a ministration of death (2 Corinthians 3:7. The New Covenant, however, is called in the next verse of 2 Corinthians 3 a ministration of the Spirit.
The law of the Spirit of life = the New Covenant.
Law is instruction. The law is not prescribed on pain of penalty, but it was instructions: this is how it is, and not otherwise.
The instruction of the Spirit and of life, for we are taught by the grace of God. That has delivered us from the Old Covenant of sin and death. The tree of life has delivered us from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
Once more: how are we in practice delivered from the judgment under which we naturally lived? By being taught in the New Covenant. Through the instruction of Spirit and life in Christ Jesus. Where we learn to understand—for teaching causes us to comprehend things—that we have received eternal life in Christ Jesus and are dead and buried to God as regards the old man, there we are in practice delivered from the dominion of the law. You can explain to Christians, Bible in hand, that we as believers are reckoned not to live under the law, because we have been delivered from the law. They may perhaps still understand and accept the whole exposition and then go on to the order of the day and simply live under the law again. How does that come about? They have no alternative. They had the law and are free from it, but have nothing else. How then are they free from it? It is only a doctrinal truth. They may perhaps understand it, but in practice it does not function at all.
There are also believers who have no idea at all of the law and of the Old Covenant, because they were not brought up in it. Yet they are free from the law. How does that come about? Because they have been taught in the grace of God. That is necessary in practice. It may be doctrinally true that we have been delivered by the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus from the Old Covenant of the law and thereby from the dominion of sin and death, but in the practice of everyday life that is of little use, for in the practice of life you must learn to live from the only real alternative, namely from grace. You should come to know the Lord—not as the One who should judge the sins in our life. Thank God He does not do that, because He is a gracious and merciful God. No, you should come to know Him as the One who sits upon the throne of grace, to whom we should come with boldness to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need - Hebrews 4:16. In practice you only become free from the law of sin and death when you

are taught in grace. That teaching is practical teaching. It is always about practical things, by the way.
How then are we in practice taught in grace? By being surrounded in practice with all sorts of people who treat us badly and do us injustice. But we have learned to live from grace and therefore we forgive them. We let it go for what it is. We would rather suffer wrong and commit it to God. To Him belongs the righteous judgment.
Forgiving others is one thing, but what is even more important is that you learn to accept your own sins. If it is not the intention that we should convert others in the sense of changing them and telling them what they must do and leave undone, why then should we tell ourselves what we must do and leave undone and make demands and that sort of thing?
There are also believers who think that if God has put away our sins, then we no longer sin. That is not so. God has put away the guilt of those sins, but we go on sinning just as hard, or perhaps even more, because the devil then also gets involved. And then?
Usually it is preached that you must not do this and that and must do other things instead. The minister will tell you how to live, for he has studied for it. We are just simple folk. That is how the Pharisees thought of their hearers too. That happens in our days exactly the same way. That is law, and therefore you live under condemnation and darkness.
We should learn for ourselves and for others what it means to live from the riches of God's grace. To live in the consciousness that we are sinners, that we are good for nothing, but that we are nevertheless children of God and that He uses us and has made us ministers of God under the New Covenant. Thereby one becomes free from the dominion of sin and death. Thereby God is glorified in us. That is quite different from trying in the practice of our life no longer to sin and that sort of thing. That is to the honour of man, but not to the honour of God. The honour of God lies herein, that He is glorified in our lives, although we are by nature still sinful. We still have a sinful body, with all its shortcomings; moreover a mortal body.
Nevertheless God's work is accomplished in it. And while the whole world with all its knowledge and science is nevertheless in darkness, we simple people let ourselves be taught only by the grace of God and therefore walk in the light. That makes us in practice free from the law of sin and death. All those theoretical discussions about whether we live under law or under grace get stuck at the lack of an alternative. Living from grace is an active choice, in which one places oneself in dependence on the Lord, in everything He places freely and for nothing at our disposal. Not because we deserve anything at all, and also not because we are decent people.
Learning to live under the New Covenant and from grace proves to be a high threshold, because the dominion of grace is obviously not according to man. With grace you cannot govern the world, but through grace we as children of God are led by God. That is what the next verse is about.

Romans 8:3
For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
A difficult sentence. First we take out the subordinate and parenthetical clauses to hold on to the main clause, but even that does not succeed. That is because two words have been swapped.

For… and then the first subordinate clause begins immediately. Open parenthesis therefore.
For (what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh) God (sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that for sin) condemned sin in the flesh.
The main clause is therefore: For God condemned sin in the flesh.
Then it becomes as follows: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life has made me free from the law of sin and death, for God condemned sin in the flesh.
Therefore we should also not walk after the flesh, for God has condemned the flesh, namely the old man with his sin. That has already happened. God no longer reckons the old man. God therefore also no longer reckons sin, for He condemned sin in the flesh.
How? That stands in the last two subordinate clauses. Namely, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that for, or on account of, sin.
The Lord Jesus came into this world and bore our sins, in order then to take away the sins of the world. He Himself bore our sins on the tree. Those sins have already been condemned, and where that has already happened, there is no further condemnation of sins and therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. He has borne our sins.
And now the first two subordinate clauses: what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh.
What was impossible for the law points to what the law should actually have done, but could not. And what the law did not do, God has done. In other words, the Son of God has done it.
The law should have taken away sin. Why the law? So that we should not sin. That is at any rate human philosophy. If we humans only know what is good and what is evil, then we can live by it. Then we know what we must not do and what we must do. That is true enough, but the point is that it does not work. It is theory, but in practice it does not work. Then you do know what the good is, but when you want to do the good, evil is present with you and the good that you want to do, you do not find. Nothing comes of it, while the evil that you do not want to do, that you do. The law takes no account of that. Even Christian ethicists take no account of that. We learn under the law what we must do and especially what we must leave undone, but it does not work, because we cannot do otherwise. It is not in our nature. You can only develop what is in you and perhaps suppress other things that are also in you, but that is all.
The law is a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear. We have been delivered from the vain manner of life handed down to us by our fathers. That is law. The law has to do with the elementary principles of the world. The law cannot deliver man from sin and therefore from death. God gave us precisely that law to demonstrate this. The history of Israel also teaches us that in reality. It does not work, and that applies just as much to children of God. Those who live under the law prove that it does not work; nevertheless they hold fast to it with all sorts of theories that have been developed for it, but are utterly unbiblical.
In any case, the law could not take away or suppress sin, but God has nevertheless accomplished what He wanted—not through the law, but through grace. Not through Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant of the law, but through Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant of grace. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by

Jesus Christ - John 1:17. That is why we should also come with boldness to the throne of grace, which implies that grace reigns.
God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. You are apparently not allowed to say that. Nevertheless it stands here. He came into this world as Man and therefore in the likeness of sinful flesh. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14.
He became partaker of flesh and blood just like the children (of God). He was then also immediately mortal. That was evident when He hung on the cross. He even became partaker of flesh and blood in order to be able to die. He also became Man in order to be able to become High Priest, for they are taken from among men - Hebrews 5:1.He became Man, in order thus to be able to die and thus to take away sins. He bore our sins and was regarded by God as a sinner. How exactly that worked is not stated in the Bible. We therefore need not apply all sorts of theories to it. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh and moreover was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin Hebrews 4:15.
Without sin = without missing, without being unfaithful. He always remained faithful to the Word of God and therefore to His heavenly Father. The Lord Jesus was tempted by the devil, but always parried with: “It is written…” He remained faithful to the Word of God. The first Adam was also tempted by the devil. There too the Word of God was called into question, and Adam went along with it.
Therefore, because He was tempted in all points like as we are, He can have compassion on our weaknesses and can be a merciful and faithful High Priest - Hebrews 4:15; 2:17.
He therefore came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Thus He was sent and became man and was compassed with infirmity - Hebrews 5:2.
Back to Romans 8:3. What the law could not do, God has now done. Thereby sin has been condemned and we have been delivered from the sin problem and therefore freed from the law. We should come to understand that, in order then to live from grace.
God condemned sin in the flesh. To what end?

Romans 8:4
That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who now do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. We are indeed no longer under the law, but the general purpose of the law is nevertheless achieved in us.
Some do not understand that and think it all lies so close together that they push it even further together and thus develop covenant theology. In that, no distinction is made in practice between law and grace. People do say that we must be saved by grace and live by grace, but you must also keep the law. Strictly speaking that cannot even be, because those two things stand directly opposite each other. But people arrive at these ideas through texts like this. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us, and that apparently comes because we keep the law. In Romans 13:9 it says that the sum of the law is that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, and love does no ill to his neighbour. So then love is the fulfilling of the law. We must therefore do that. But that is not what it says. It says that the general idea of the law, the summary, is that thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all that is in thee, and the second commandment like unto it, that thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The beauty of that is that precisely that is fulfilled in children of God who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For do we love the Lord our God with all our heart and so on, above all? If all is well, yes. It is the fruit, namely, of God's Word in us. That is the fruit of the Spirit. Do we as children of God love our Neighbour? In the high and also in the derived sense of the word? Our Neighbour is the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we not love Him? And do we not develop a love for our brothers and sisters? That is the fruit of the Spirit in us. That is now the fulfilling of the law, but it no longer tells us so, for we no longer live under the law. We must not love God; we must not love our neighbour; we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and let ourselves be taught by the grace of God. Why? Where does that lead?
That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who no longer walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Now that it is no longer necessary, now that it is no longer imposed as obligation, it is suddenly realised. So that someone like Paul says: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," "to me to live is Christ." That is the same as: "I love the Lord my God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind and with all that is in me."
Love does no ill to his neighbour, and we who love the brethren do no ill to the brethren. On the contrary! We serve one another.
That is therefore what the law generally prescribed compulsorily, but then we could not do it. But now we have been delivered from the law, and now there arises spontaneously, through the dominion of grace, precisely what the law first prescribed to us compulsorily.
God condemned sin in the flesh, through the Lord Jesus, who bore our sins on the tree, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk after the flesh, but in accordance with the Spirit.

Romans 8:5
For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.
Those who are after the flesh = those who live according to earthly and human standards. If you are after the flesh, then you mind the things of the flesh, the earthly things. Then you occupy yourself with man and his earthly circumstances. But we as children of God should be after the Spirit and therefore mind the things of the Spirit.
To mind = to seek. To be directed towards something. Seek the things which are above; set your affection on things above. Both words indicate that one directs oneself towards something.
The whole problem is that where a man, often also believers, has problems, he is inclined to examine himself and his own life and tries to find out what he should do and/or leave undone, so that he can cope with the circumstances or the problems. If you fall into the hands of so-called pastoral care, then only one thing is central, namely man and usually yourself. Then everyone occupies themselves with you and judges you and lets you talk, and then it is only about man with his problems. The Bible teaches that the problems often only become greater as a result. Man is self-centred, and that does not work. The problem cannot be solved in man himself. Man is the problem. He can get rid of that by directing himself towards something or someone else. That is why

the Bible says: “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” - Colossians 3:1–3.
Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, that he may forget his misery. That strong drink is a picture of the new life under the New Covenant. Give that new life to those who are bitterly sorrowful, that they may forget their misery. We must learn to forget ourselves, to direct ourselves towards Someone else. The best way to do that is to seek Him who is above.
Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things that you need here on earth according to man will be added unto you. For your Father knoweth that ye have need of them. In short, we should seek the Lord and, in other words, serve the Lord, and He cares for His children, or rather for His staff. We are both. That is how it works.
Man does not need insight into his own problems, but insight into who Christ is, that we might know Him and the power of His resurrection. That is the general biblical message. The problem of man is that he is self-oriented, and if he lives under the law, that is even much stronger. If you are self-centred, then you do not see the Lord, and when Jesus of Nazareth comes, they do not recognise Him in any way as the Messiah. So it was with the Jewish people under the law. They thought a great deal of themselves, but the intention is that we should not be self-centred, but centred on the Lord whom we serve.

Romans 8:7
Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Galatians 4:5
To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
Hebrews 10:25
Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.The Lord is seated at the right hand of God, who is our common Head. If we seek those things which are above, we come together as children of God at that one Head, and there is our fellowship. When we enter the throne of grace and draw near to the High Priest, we meet one another there. There we have our mutual assembling together, and we should not forsake it - Hebrews 10:25.

Romans 8:7
Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
“Therefore that” = the strong form of “because.”
First it speaks of walking after the flesh, then of thinking after the flesh, then carnal thinking is called death, and now the carnal mind is enmity against God.
Death is therefore enmity against God. For it is no fellowship, but the opposite of it. Instead of peace there is therefore war, conflict. It is of course not polite to say, but all that effort to establish an outward unity within a local congregation may perhaps be well-intentioned, but you know how it is with good intentions—the expression is only used where things turn out wrong anyway. It may be well-intentioned to bring about that outward unity, but in reality it is a denial of the unity that exists in Christ. There is in itself

nothing against an outward unity, but when people focus on it and think they must bring it about, they are denying the spiritual unity that ought to be there.
Carnal thinking is enmity against God because this thinking does not submit itself to the law of God, to the instruction of God. And it cannot do so either.
You may well try to subject those outward things to God Himself, but in practice it is utterly impossible. Therefore it is enmity against God. People are then busy with impossible things, and moreover with undesirable things.

Romans 8:8
So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
“And” = namely. Namely, those who are in the flesh, or who walk after the flesh, or who think or seek carnally, cannot please God. That is utterly impossible. It may perhaps be pleasing to the flesh itself; it gives a good feeling that you are doing your best and so on, but it is not pleasing to God.
Pleasing to God is that we lay aside the flesh and seek the things which are above and set our affection on things above. That is why the next verse also says…

Romans 8:9
But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
To be after the flesh = to mind the things of the flesh. Whether we mind spiritual or carnal things the apostle cannot know. The point is, of course—but that is the theory and it is also true—that we are officially not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. For we have died with Christ as regards the flesh and have been raised with Him as regards the Spirit. That is our official legal position before God. The consequence of that should be that since we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, we should also walk after the Spirit. If we have been made alive unto God by the Spirit, we should also mind the things of the Spirit. If we are sanctified in Christ Jesus and are therefore saints, then we should also walk holily.
Fundamentally we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, we are officially in the Spirit.
In this verse you may ask who is actually in whom. Are we in the Spirit, or is the Spirit in us? Both are stated. It immediately illustrates the meaning of the little word “in.”
“In” = joined to; in union with…In any case it is so that we are not in the flesh, for that has died with Christ. That flesh has no further meaning for God as regards the old man, but the body should indeed be used in the service of the new man instead of for the old man. We should place that body at the disposal of righteousness to serve it, but that does not mean that our position is in the flesh. On the contrary. God knows us according to or in the Spirit.
“If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” = if indeed it is so that the Spirit of God dwells in you. If that is so, then you are in the Spirit. These are very elementary spiritual truths. The devil is always out to deprive us preferably of those truths. But this is the foundation. If you distort that, then everything you might subsequently learn collapses. If the foundation is not sound, nothing remains of the rest. That is what he is always tampering with.
That is why there is indeed a teaching that says a man must first come to faith (then he is born again, for it is very hard to deny that this is so), but afterwards he must also still

receive the Holy Spirit. And how do we know that we have received the Holy Spirit? You cannot know that from practice, because it is invisible and you cannot see it and therefore cannot know it. Then people invented that you can nevertheless know it by something, namely that you must, for example, be able to speak in tongues. That is supposed to prove it. There are also less observable variants, but then committees are appointed to establish whether you have really received the Holy Spirit and whether you are therefore worthy to partake of the holy communion. You therefore cannot know it, but you can believe it, because Scripture says so. This whole discussion is wrong. The point is namely that we receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again, not because you get Him free with it, but because it is the same thing. Regeneration is the receiving of the Holy Spirit. When a man is born again, he is born of the Spirit, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. When we are born again, what is born? Holy Spirit, and that is born of the Holy Spirit. When we are born again and are born of the Spirit, then what are we? Spirit. Do we then have Spirit? Yes. But is that not different from being Spirit? No, for is man a soul, or does he have a soul? That makes no difference. Do we have life or are we life? It makes no difference. It is a way of speaking. Are we ourselves or do we have ourselves? When we are born again we therefore receive new life, and that is born of the Holy Spirit and is therefore spirit and we therefore receive the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus said: “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” - John 7:38–39. Rivers of living water = new life, namely Spirit. That is not something else, but absolutely the same.

Our position before God is therefore on the basis of the Spirit. We have received eternal life. That is divine life, the life of Christ, and we are therefore in the Spirit. If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. It could just as well have said: If you are at least born again, or if you are at least raised with Christ.

Then it is also stated the other way round: For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

First it speaks of Spirit, then of Spirit of God. It will be clear that it is the same Spirit. In the third instance He is called Spirit of Christ. It is still the same Spirit. In the next verse number four is mentioned, namely Christ

.So:

- Spirit;
- Spirit of God;
- Spirit of Christ;
- Christ.

That is four times the same, for otherwise it would be nonsense and only great confusion would arise. One and the same Spirit is designated with four different words, so that we should understand what it is about.

The Spirit is namely Christ; the Spirit is the Spirit of God, namely the Spirit of Christ, for Christ is God, and if it is the Spirit of Christ, then it is simply Christ, but then of course invisible.

The problem, however, is that in the past a theology was devised, which was voted on in the year 325 of our era, under the leadership of the Roman emperor Constantine. A teaching was then adopted which says that we have a God who is triune. It comes down to the fact that in heaven we can see three thrones, possibly next to each other, with on

one throne a Father and on the other a Son and on the third a Holy Spirit, and those three are not identical but equal. Those who have studied for it do not understand it either, and they explain to us that they do not understand it either and we can therefore forget about it altogether. Of course we know from the Bible God the Father and God the Son and also God the Holy Spirit. But those three do not stand next to each other as three persons. This sort of teaching darkens what the Bible really says about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus said: "I and my Father are one." When Thomas said: "Show us the Father," the Lord Jesus said: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" for when the Father is shown, men see the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the person, the image, the expression of the being of God. Where Christ, or His power, is invisible and in any case works invisibly, He is therefore called the Spirit of God, or Spirit, or the Spirit of Christ, but in all cases it is Christ. That stands here plainly too. Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, for indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. And if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, then you belong to Him, but if anyone has not the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit, or Christ, he is none of his.

Romans 8:10
And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin (sin without the "n"; you must cross out that "n"), that is to say, the body should no longer serve sin. The body is dead so that it should no longer serve sin. But the Spirit is life so that we should serve righteousness thereby. This is still what was set out in chapter 6, but now it says that it happens through the working of the Spirit; that is Christ in us. In the epistle to the Colossians the work of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all. Or is it? The word Spirit does not occur in the whole epistle, but the Spirit is called Christ there. One is reckoned to know Him. That is why it says: "Christ in you" and not "the Holy Spirit in you." What is called Spirit in one epistle is called Christ in Colossians, for example, and in the epistles of John He is called the Son and therefore the Heir.
The Son in us is the Spirit, for he that hath the Son hath life. It could just as well have said: He that hath the Spirit hath life. That is the same. Because the Son is also the Heir and one receives His life, one is also heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.
The list is not complete yet. We had Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, and Christ. Of all four it is said that He dwells in us.

Romans 8:11
But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

- Spirit;
- Spirit of God;
- Spirit of Christ;
- Christ;
- The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead;
- He that raised up Christ from the dead;
- His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

With the last we are back where we began: the Spirit.
The idea is simply this: that if that Spirit dwells in us, then we are alive according to the Spirit. We should therefore mind spiritual things.
Now back to the content of the verses.

Romans 8:9
But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.We are only His possession if we are born again and have received that Spirit. Paul assumes that the Spirit is in us.

Romans 8:10
And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
We should no longer serve sin, since we have been delivered from it. The body is therefore dead to the service of sin, but the Spirit is life so that we should serve righteousness thereby.

Romans 8:11
But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.
The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead = the Spirit of God.
The Lord Jesus died and said: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Then He gave up the spirit. Then He no longer had it and was therefore dead, but afterwards He received that Spirit again, in accordance with Psalm 51, and He therefore rose from the dead thereby, and that Spirit is called the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead. If that Spirit who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us, will not that Spirit also raise us from the dead? For the Spirit gives life, for the Spirit is life.
He that raised up Christ from the dead = When Jesus was raised from the dead, He became the Christ. Jesus is the name He received when He was born as man in Bethlehem, and Christ is the name He received when He was raised from the dead. The Spirit raised Him and will also raise our mortal bodies.
If you read superficially, you may think that we shall in the future yet be made alive by the resurrection of the flesh. That is not what it says, for then it would have to say: “He shall also quicken your dead bodies by his Spirit.” But it says “mortal bodies,” and mortal bodies are not dead. He will not quicken our dead bodies, although that will also happen, but that is not what stands here.
If the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, it will logically follow that He will now make alive our bodies which have not even died yet. Through the Spirit who dwells in us we have been made alive unto God, and if that Spirit dwells in us, that means we have been delivered from the service of sin and of corruption. And because we have been made alive according to the Spirit, we should also walk according to the Spirit and therefore mind spiritual things. That is the story. The problem is that people, especially through that traditional doctrine of the Trinity, have completely lost the meaning and nature of the work of the Spirit. They no longer know who He is and have deprived Him of His identity, so that in some circles the Spirit is seen only as a mystical Power that would work in us.

But He is Someone and is called Jehovah, but also Christ. He dwells in us. To Him we should be subject. In other words, He should reign in our life. Even stronger, He should be our life.

Romans 8:12
Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
If that Spirit dwells in us and we have thereby come to life, then we are debtors—not to live after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:13
For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
For to be carnally minded is death. Even if we live after the Spirit we shall die; this body will die. It is not about our physical death, but about our spiritual position. If we live after the flesh and set our affection on it, we distance ourselves from the work of the Spirit and therefore from the life of Christ in us. If we mind carnal things, we in practice stand apart from the things Christ would do in us. The consequence is that people then nevertheless seek that Spirit, but it does not work, because they seek it in a carnal way. You find that illustrated in circles where people talk a great deal about the work of the Spirit, but focus on the flesh. Such as speaking in tongues and the healing of the body, the growth of the local congregation, even worldly wealth. Those are all outward things, and at the same time they talk about the Spirit. Why? Because they miss Him and therefore indeed arrive at a teaching that says you are indeed born again, but must afterwards still receive the Spirit. They have quenched Him, or grieved Him.
What stands here is that if you live after the flesh, you will in practice live outside fellowship with the Lord, because people reject Him. They do not seek Him. They seek other things, outward, worldly, earthly, carnal things. Then they experience in their practical walk of life and therefore also in their thinking death. Then they experience that they are separated from Him. They then have to do strange things to restore that fellowship. That is not necessary at all. One should only seek spiritual things.
But if through the Spirit and therefore through spiritual walk, through minding spiritual things or through seeking the things which are above, you mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. We should hold the flesh for dead, or lay it aside. You should have no fellowship with the old man. Therefore we know one another no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for we are new creations in Christ and therein is our fellowship. By laying aside the old man, by ignoring him, you mortify the deeds of the body. But if you try to do that, it will prove not to succeed. That is the well-known story of the white bears. You need an alternative. Brown bears, for example. If you then think only of brown bears, you forget that white bears also exist. By learning something else, by directing ourselves towards something else, we unlearn living after the flesh. You cannot combat the flesh, the old man, sin. That even works counterproductively.
We should mortify everything that has to do with the old man by seeking the things which are above. Read Colossians 3 for that.
By living after the Spirit the deeds of the body are mortified and you will therefore also experience in the practice of your life fellowship with the Lord, for...

Romans 8:14
For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
If we mind or seek the Spirit, we shall be led by that Spirit. That will determine our thoughts and our life. It will determine our walk. The salvation of the soul comes about through minding the things which are above. Then you are led by the Spirit. If you mind carnal things, you are led by the flesh.
This was a long introduction to what is ultimately set out in this chapter. The question is where we are led to. There is a stubborn misunderstanding about that leading of the Spirit. We wait and see where He leads us. People then usually mean the daily circumstances. The Spirit does not lead us through something, but leads us to something. The question is where He then brings us. Not, what does our life look like while we are led by Him? If you must wait for the daily leading of the Lord, you have rejected your own responsibility. We as believers should rather learn to bear our own responsibility, in the sense that we make our own decisions. If you wait on the Lord, you make no decisions. That is precisely the opposite of what the Lord would do to us. He would lead us to maturity. Adults are mature because they make their own decisions and bear their own responsibility. We as children of God should be led to our sonship, or rather to our placing as sons, unfortunately translated as “adoption of sons.”
Galatians 4:5
To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
To redeem those who were under the law from the law, with the purpose that they should be placed as sons, as heirs. As long as we therefore hold fast to the law and let it determine our decisions, we are not led by the Holy Spirit and therefore do not arrive at our placing as sons. For the law is for children, and as long as someone is under the law, he is regarded as immature. As long as we hold fast to the law as a rule of life, we remain children of God, it is true, but we do not become sons and will therefore miss our inheritance. We should let ourselves be led by the Holy Spirit; only then do we arrive at our placing as sons.

In short, we are on the way to an inheritance that is reserved for us in heaven. In chapters 9–11 this idea is developed much more broadly. The point is that in the Old Testament it was promised that another people would receive the birthright instead of the Jewish people. In the New Testament we learn that the church receives the birthright above the Jewish people, for the simple reason that the church is the first people to have part in the resurrection of Christ and therefore in the New Covenant. The Jewish people will have part in that only at the second coming of Christ.
That is why the Jewish people are not our elder brother, as people would have us believe, for we are placed above the Jewish people. In the Old Testament it is also already said that someone other than Judah will receive the birthright, namely Ephraim. The birthright of the church in our days above the Jewish people is the fulfilment of the promise that Ephraim would receive the birthright above his brother Judah. It logically follows from that that the church must in some way descend from Ephraim according to earthly standards.
We must therefore bear in mind that this Hebrew word Abba brings us back to Old Testament prophecies, in which the sonship of the church is indeed spoken of.

Romans 8:16
The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
The same Spirit = the Spirit Himself. That Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Here “children” is rightly translated. In the original text it also says “children.” That concerns who we are now. We are children of God, but in the future we shall be something else, namely sons.

Romans 8:17
And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
And if we are children of God, then we are also heirs (sons). Heirs of God, of course, for we are children of God and therefore joint-heirs with Christ. That is true in practice only if we walk after the Spirit.
If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together with him. That suffering is not the word for enduring pain, for you can suffer other things too. Some things you can suffer and some you cannot. It is then an expression of love. That is what it is here too. The idea is that we need endurance. We should run with endurance the race that is set before us.
Endurance implies that you submit yourself to something or someone. In German that is Leidenschaft: passion, devotion, complete surrender.
We should suffer with him, with a view to that inheritance laid up for us in heaven and therefore run with full surrender the race that is set before us. That is the race of faith in Hebrews 12, the opening verses. That chapter speaks of how children are brought up to sonship. The placing as sons is the final receiving of glory.
The same applied to the Lord Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 5, where it says that Christ was glorified when He was appointed Son of God and High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He did not glorify Himself to be High Priest, but God glorified Him as High Priest and as Heir, when it was said to Him: “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” and when it was said to Him: “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.”
Glorification = sharing in the inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ.
God has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us - 1 Peter 1:3–4. That is therefore a whole step higher than merely being children of God. This belongs to the better promises of the New Covenant. The promises of the Old Testament said that a man who believes would one day become a child of God, while New Testament promises expressly say that we are children of God and that moreover in the future there is also an inheritance laid up for us. The better promises were not made to believers who would become children of God, but to children of God who would be placed as sons. That is the high point of this epistle. And if we suffer with Christ, we shall in the future also be glorified with him, which means that we shall then be placed as sons.

Romans 8:18
For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us
I reckon = I calculate, I compute (logizomai).

To be compared = to weigh, to determine value
The present suffering does not weigh against the glory that shall be revealed to us in the future. Suffering is of course regarded as something negative. Suffering has to do with humiliation, with submission, while glory has to do with exaltation
Both the suffering and the glory were already mentioned in verse 17. Paul applies it here. It is not about suffering in general, whatever that may be understood to mean, but about suffering with Christ. That means we should undergo the same suffering as Christ. A suffering for His name's sake; a suffering therefore that arises from our submission to the Word of God, with all the practical consequences that entail. That suffering does not weigh against the glory that shall be revealed to us.
Peter says that you can also suffer as an evildoer. That is not the intention. You may of course misbehave and therefore be persecuted or oppressed, but that sort of suffering receives no reward
Nowadays you wonder who is actually still faithful to God's Word. People prefer the word of others above what the Bible teaches.
Glory, birthright, exaltation is only for those who are faithful to the Word of God.
1 Peter 4:12–16
Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:
But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.
But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.
Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.
We should regard that suffering as the most natural thing. It simply belongs with it. In contrast to that we may expect glory for the future. Peter says exactly the same as Paul.
If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. As far as they are concerned, He is evil spoken of, but as far as you are concerned, He is glorified.
But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Someone who busies himself with another belongs in the same list as murderers, thieves, and evildoers. That is doing evil. Then you are a thief and a murderer, for then you occupy yourself with someone's practical life. If you try to grasp that, you are actually a murderer and a thief. That brings suffering with it. But we should not have that suffering.
Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.
For it is promised to us that suffering with Christ does not weigh against the glory that follows.
The beauty is that this says we live under the promises of the New Covenant, for under the Old Testament people were saved in hope and received the right ever to become children of God, but meanwhile we are that too - 1 John 3:1–2. Both Peter and Paul say in their great addresses in Acts 2 and 13 that those Old Testament promises were fulfilled when God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. For us the promise applies that

we shall in the future be placed as sons, and that belongs to the better promises of the New Covenant. We share with Old Testament believers that we have been saved in hope and look forward to the fulfilment of the promises made to us, but the difference lies in the nature of those promises. Old Testament believers were never promised that they would be placed as sons, but we were.
That is why we have part not only in salvation, but in so great salvation - Hebrews 2:3. Not only in salvation, but in salvation with eternal glory. That is why we have not merely a High Priest, but so great a High Priest. It is all a measure greater.
Romans 8:19
For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.
Children = sons (huios).
With uplifted head = eagerly awaiting.
Even the old world has expectation of the future. That is to say, that world waits for something, namely the manifestation of the sons of God.
The creature is here the complete creation.
Creation is feminine; later it says she is in travail.

Romans 8:20
For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,
Vanity = emptiness; futility. In essence there is nothing.
Creation has been subjected to vanity.
It seems that “him” should have been written with a capital letter and that God has therefore subjected creation to vanity. Creation is vain, but that is not regarded in Ecclesiastes as negative, or as a curse.
Creation has been subjected to vanity; that is simply how it is.

Romans 8:21
Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
In hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.
Creation has therefore been subjected to vanity, but also to the bondage of corruption. For it must be delivered from that. Corruption, namely death, reigns in this world. That is why creation has been subjected to vanity. It becomes impossible to bring anything lasting to pass in this creation. Everything changes in this world. Nowadays people are again concerned about climate change. Nothing is so changeable as the weather. And as for the world, it is changeable in the sense that it will be entirely replaced. Moreover, one generation comes and another goes. So it goes. All that is built up must disappear again tomorrow. We human beings think that is how it should be and must be and even lend a hand. That is called progressive. What we have just completed we immediately begin to demolish again, for we have new ideas. Nowadays that goes so fast that people speak of hypes. Then it does not even last one generation but even shorter. That is subjected to vanity.
“Expectation” from verse 19 implies that one knows it. I do not think that is the case here. The world does not know that the children of God will be glorified in the future and that that glory will then be manifested. The world does not know that, for it is ignorant

and lives under the wrath of God. Creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, so that afterwards the world too will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. We wait for our placing as sons, and creation does too. Only then and thereafter will the creation itself also be delivered from the bondage of corruption. We have meanwhile been delivered from that.
Hebrews 2:14–15
Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
That has happened and we have been delivered from it.
Unto the glorious liberty of the children of God.
In verse 19 it was the expectation of the manifestation of the sons of God. Here it is the expectation of the liberty of the glory of the children of God. When those children are glorified, they are sons.
The peculiarity of creation as such is that it actively goes out to meet the future. The question is why man in general reaches out to the future and does so with all means. And where the means become greater, man reaches out to that future at an ever higher speed. But for the individual man it applies that the faster you go forward, the sooner you are dead. We have the past, the present too, but we cannot imagine anything of it, for we are on the way. We are on the way from the past to the future. The present is only a hinge point. You cannot even measure the present. It is only a point on that long course and therefore we are on the way to the future, but in the future we die. Why then do we direct ourselves to the future and why do we build on it and why do we have such images of the future before us? It is actually ridiculous, for tomorrow never comes; it is always today. There is only one explanation. Somewhere in that creation the principle is enclosed that in the future everything will be different and better. But the future of this world is accompanied by death and resurrection. In some way that is programmed in, just as in man. It is in it. The annoying thing is that man engages in philosophy and says that in the future everything will anyway be better. People in the past were stupid, but in the future they will be intelligent and we in between bring that about. In the past everyone was feeble-minded and we now do much better and in the future they will, you can hardly imagine it, do even better. If you do not join in, you are old-fashioned and conservative. Old people especially must be dumped, for they hold back progress. In any case, people know they are on the way to something better, but only not how, because they do not accept the Word of God.
Creation eagerly awaits that future. We are placed a little higher, so that we can look a little further and know how it is. The higher your eyes, the further you can look. For that purpose we have been seated with Christ in heavenly places and can look a little further.
Creation eagerly awaits the manifestation of the sons of God. They may not be aware of it, but it is so. That is an important statement, for it is one of the answers to the question why, if there is a God, He does nothing. He will do something and has also promised it, but that waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. Sons of God can only be manifested when they have first been placed as sons. In reality the world waits for exactly the same as we do, namely for our glorification.

God's work on the world is at a standstill. That is simply the nature of this present dispensation of the mystery. God is now first gathering a people from the Gentiles for His name. When that people is glorified and placed as sons, then the Lord, together with the church, will complete that work on the world. That is at the second coming of Christ. That is what it must wait for. We should also not run ahead of that, for we are still officially children of God and will remain so as long as our body is not yet redeemed (verse 23).
Our expectation of the future is also not really the rapture of the church, but our manifestation in glory. From an earthly standpoint the rapture of the church is our hiding, for insofar as we were here in public, we shall disappear here. Only at least seven years later will Christ be manifested in glory and we with Him. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory - Colossians 3:4. Only thereafter will the Lord continue His work on the world, to complete it then too. Until that time creation is at any rate subjected to vanity and corruption. That has been so since Adam, but especially since the resurrection of Christ, for since that time the Lord hides Himself from the world and has given the world over to darkness and its own lusts. Everything that happens in the world does not aim to contribute to God's work. That was broken off at the first coming of Christ and will therefore be continued from the manifestation of the sons of God.
In verse 18 it is not so much about the glory that shall be revealed to us, but about glory to us that shall be revealed. For our glory shall be revealed. The question to whom that glory is revealed is then answered in the following verses, namely to the world, which waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. The thought is not so much that we shall only receive glory in the future, but that it shall be revealed in the future. For we already receive glory now and that will be visible in the future.
We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, implying that we are now being glorified, just as Moses was changed in his dealings with the Lord and gradually received a shining face. Where we now know the Lord face to face, we are changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory. Ever more glorious, that is. We only do not see that and the world does not see it in us either. There are some who do see it, for now through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places. Those who are in heaven are reckoned to see that indeed. That is happening already and in the future it will be manifested. That is where we are on the way to.
When in the future the Lord shall appear in glory, He comes as Son among sons. He comes as Head of the church with us, with the many saints or with His angels. Only then will the Lord continue His work on the world. That work is only of a different nature from what the world thinks.

Romans 8:22
For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Romans 8:28
And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
We know that for those who love God—and therefore serve God…To love = in practice to serve.

Love is an activity. It does not merely refer to a feeling or something similar. When people love one another, they will serve one another. God commends His love toward us. How? In that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. So God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Love is an active occupation.

We therefore know that God works all things together for good for those who love Him and therefore suffer with Christ, submit themselves to the Word of God, and run the race that is set before them—for those who are called according to His purpose.

Who are they? Those who love God. They are the ones called according to His purpose. Called to what? To become children of God? That is no longer the subject of this whole chapter. That was dealt with in chapters 3, 4, and 5. Here it concerns children of God who are all officially partakers of the heavenly calling, but only those children of God who in practice will also be placed as sons of God. For they are the ones who suffer with Him, who run with endurance the race set before them, and who therefore in the practice of life love God and serve Him above all. They are the ones called according to His purpose, according to His plan, and for whom all things work together for good. They are called to sonship, for that is what this passage is about. Chapter 9 also deals with this, where misunderstandings always arise in connection with the doctrine of election. But children of God are called to become sons of God.

Paul writes to Timothy: “Lay hold on eternal life,” as if the man did not already have it. Yet the intention was that he should also live that eternal life. We had already mentioned that idea in Romans 6. The wages of sin is death (already now), but the gift of God is eternal life (already now). Where we live that eternal life as a gift of grace, there we are also in practice partakers of this calling.

We know that for those who love God—namely for those who are called according to His purpose—all things work together for good.

We are children of God. We are called to sonship, for that was what it was all about. To what then must all things work together for good? To sonship. Sonship is the good.

If therefore it says that all things will work together for good, that means that all evil things will work together for good, for it is obvious that all good things will work together for good. That is so self-evident that it becomes ridiculous to state it. It concerns the things we suffer, for that was what it was about. Those would work together for good. It concerns our passion for Christ. That brings suffering with it, and that suffering leads to glory. Not suffering as an evildoer, but suffering for His name’s sake. That brings us this inheritance, and from that we live.

We are children of God, and if all is well we are already well on the way in the race set before us. We have no doubt whether we shall be saved, but perhaps whether we shall receive that inheritance in the future. But on the way to that inheritance we have the Spirit who prays for us and leads us into all the truth. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our future inheritance. That Spirit brings us there. You need have no doubt about that. If you have doubt in you, that doubt should be whether you indeed let that Spirit work in you. If there is no doubt about that, then there need be no further doubts at all. If you have love for the truth, you need have no doubt about that. That you do not grasp the truth all at once is true. It takes time. You can only be led if you at least take a step now and then. If you sit in your car and turn the steering wheel,

you do not move forward. The thing must first drive; only then do you move forward. One should walk, run, and only as you run can you be led. As long as you do not run the race, there is nothing for the Spirit to lead.
The call is to walk worthy of the calling with which we are called, and in that we should be led. You should walk in search of the truth, and everything that happens along the way will be used by God for good. That is all for our building up, for our training, for our habituation. Thereby we are brought up to sonship and learn to bear responsibility. That is how the life of a child of God is constituted. Together on the way to our placing as sons, through searching the Scriptures, by letting ourselves be led into all the truth that the Spirit makes known to us. He does that first of all through the written Word. It is our responsibility, when we hear the truth, to accept it and make it our own. That changes us from glory to glory. In the future that glory which we have already received will also be revealed at the coming of Christ.

Romans 8:29
For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8:30
Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
The stylistic figures used in these last two verses make it somewhat difficult to assess their content properly.
For... this verse therefore gives an explanation of verse 28.
Whom = those who = plural.
What is said here is that God is busy with something, that He is doing a work in us.To predestinate = horizo = to determine the horizon = to determine the future = to predestine = to determine the final destination.
In the past, beforehand, the final destination was determined.
Whom He foreknew = God foreknew Christ and determined the final destination for Him, under the motto: “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” or “the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world.”
Whenever the Bible speaks of Christ, it always also concerns the church, for the church has part in Christ. It is His body and has been planted together with Him. Christ was foreknown, and since we have part in Christ, God has also foreknown us in Him. He has given us a place in Him on the basis of our faith. Not on the basis of foreknowledge that we would also come to faith.
This may seem a personal interpretation, but that is exactly what stands in Ephesians 1:4–5, namely that God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world and has predestinated us unto the adoption of sons. A distant past is therefore connected with the future.
Those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son (to become). We are not yet, but we must become. That is also very much the intention.
It is of course important to realise that the natural man is not a bearer of the image of Christ or of God. We were not that before the fall either. We bear the image of the first Adam. The first man is of the earth, earthy, and as we have borne the image of the

earthy… we are therefore not image-bearers of God, but image-bearers of Adam. But does it not say in Genesis 1 that God would make man in His image and likeness? That is true, and that is what Romans 8 is about here. The Bible says that Christ is the first Man who is the image-bearer of God. That would mean nothing if every man already was. He is therefore the First, and we should follow Him in that. We should be changed into His image; as we have borne the image of the earthy, we should bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:48–49.
The heavenly Man is Christ, and of Him it is triumphantly said after His resurrection that He is the image of God. Always after His resurrection (see Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; 2:9.
In short, “Let us make Adam in our image and after our likeness” is a statement that applies over the head of the first Adam to the last Adam. For the first Adam was a figure of Him who was to come. God was still busy until the resurrection of Christ making a man in His image and likeness. That was not complete in Adam. It was good, but not finished.
What we learn here is that we as the first believers after the resurrection of Christ, just like Christ, should become image-bearers of God, with all the consequences that entail. For we should be conformed to the image of His Son, so that we should also inherit together with that Son.
That has been the subject at least since verse 17. If we are children of God, then we are heirs. If we receive the inheritance, that means we are placed as sons. Then we are placed in the birthright.
That is what this is about.
We should be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn together with many brethren.
Among = the Greek word “en” = in.
When this word is followed by a plural, the translators render it “among,” in the sense of “in,” namely in the midst of.
But the real meaning is stronger, for it expresses fellowship. It is as one whole with Christ, planted together with Him. That meaning obviously applies here too.
He is not the firstborn before many brethren; as if: many brethren and He is the firstborn of them. It is about all those brethren together being firstborn, because they are truly one. That is why the Bible speaks in Hebrews 12, for example, of the church of the firstborn. Not only the Head of the church is the Firstborn, but the whole church is firstborn. That is also the meaning of the Greek word for church = ecclesia = the legislative or judicial assembly from the people. In Hebrew terms it would have been the elders of the people, the council of elders. The continuation of the council of elders was the Sanhedrin. All who were part of it were not only priests but high priests. Higher than…So it is with the church too. A church of firstborn. Within the church there is distinction, but it is regarded in itself as one with Christ, as sharing in His birthright.
Son = heir;
Brother = joint-heir.
Colossians 1:15
Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:
Colossians 1:18
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

He is the firstborn of every creature. It is hard to say of the old creation that He was the firstborn, for He was rather late for that. It concerns the definitive creation, the new creation. The work of Genesis 1, from verse 2 onwards, concerns a work—albeit rather literal and historical—of restitution of this old world, but the intention of that work was that a new creation should be brought about. Of that the first Adam is not the Firstling, but the last Adam is. After that comes the church. Not only in chronological order, but also in rank.
After that it says that He is the Head of the body, namely the church. For the church has part in Him and therefore also in His birthright.
He is the firstborn from the dead, so that He might have the preeminence in all things.
In = the same word that in Romans 8 is translated “among.”
All things = the whole church, for that was what it was about. He is the Head of the church, so that He might be the First in all members of that church, but also together with all members of the church, for that is the meaning of “in.”
He is indeed the First for all in the church, but that is not what stands here. The intention is that He together with all members of this body should be the First of a new creation. That also stands in the next verse.
Colossians 1:19
For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;
What fulness? What fulness dwells in Christ? The fulness of the Father, or the fulness of God.
Colossians 2:9
For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;
For it pleased God that in Him all the fulness of God should dwell. That fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ’s body and therefore in the church.
Colossians 2:10
And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:
Ye = those who are part of His body.
In short, Christ is the firstborn from the dead, so that He might be the First together with all those other firstborn.
Philippians 3:21
Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
Not only spiritually, but also bodily like Christ.
However that may be, we should be conformed to the image of His Son. We should in practice become image-bearers of God. We too should therefore be the reflection of God’s glory. That is why it also says that we shall be glorified with Christ in the future.
We have been predestinated in Christ unto sonship. Not beside Him, but together with Him.
Hebrews 2:10
For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
He leads many unto glory. They therefore share together the birthright. The many sons do indeed have an Archēgos, a captain. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was to be perfected through sufferings.
To perfect = to consecrate to the service of God, for the Son was to serve the Father.

The placing as sons is therefore the ultimate consecration. The placing as priesthood, sonship, or kingship.
Hebrews 2:11
For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,
We are one. Of one piece, of the same nature. We come from the same promises of God and have part in one and the same sonship.
The Lord Jesus Christ calls us His brethren, namely His joint-heirs. He already does that beforehand in the Old Testament, for reference is made to Psalm 22:22.
Christ and the church therefore share in one and the same sonship. That is why the church is presented as one Man. That is rather unknown, because people have made the church a woman. Preferably an unmarried woman (which would still be reasonably biblical on the basis of Ephesians 5), but a virgin, an ideal bride who has never had fellowship with the Bridegroom. That is a caricature of what the church is according to the Bible, for we are precisely reckoned to live in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is therefore not our Bridegroom, but perhaps our Husband, but that is so because according to Genesis man and wife are one body. In all other Scripture passages the church is not described as a woman (although the word church is feminine), but as a man and even as a Son. Where people do not see that, they do not understand these chapters or the above-mentioned Scripture passages either.
Adoption of sons can always still be adoption of daughters, for adopted children can be girls. But it is not about adopted children, but about placed sons, or sons to be placed.
Moreover, you then also miss Revelation 12, which is a very important part of the prophecy there, where the woman gives birth to a male son who is caught up unto God and to His throne. That is birthright. It is not about the person of the Lord Jesus there, but about the church as a whole. It is caught up unto God and to His throne.
Caught up = raptured = to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17. What also comes with it is that in Psalm 2 it is spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ, where it is said to Him: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” In the New Testament it is said that that statement was fulfilled when God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. That is how it stands, for example, in Acts 13, where Paul quotes it. He adds that this was fulfilled when God begat Jesus from the dead. That does not take away that this same statement and also what follows further in Psalm 2 is indeed applied in the Bible to the whole church. Particularly in the same passage in Revelation 12, where the Son is caught up unto God and to His throne, that He should rule the nations with a rod of iron. That is regarded as the fulfilment of Psalm 2, which we know concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, but of which it is said here that it concerns the whole church.
We also find it in Revelation 2:26–27:
Revelation 2:26–27
And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
That is that statement from Psalm 2. It is here applied to all believers of our dispensation. That also stands behind it, for: “even as I received of my Father.” That means the statement from Psalm 2, applied to the Lord Jesus, proves in the second instance to apply to the whole church, namely to all who have part in Him.

Back to Romans 8:29.
We should be conformed to the image of His Son, or become so, so that He might be the firstborn together with many brethren. Together they are the church of the firstborn. Christ is also a member of the church, only He was the first member and we have been added to Him. We are members of the same body of which He is also a member.

Romans 8:30
Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
Whom He predestinated, these He also called;
Whom He also called, these He also justified;
Whom He justified, these He also glorified.
These four concepts—predestinated, called, justified, and glorified—are connected with one another. We have part in this predestination unto sonship. Therefore we are called unto sonship. Glorification is the sonship. We have first been justified, acquitted, and therefore destined unto heirs. We are acquitted and therefore free to go. The slave will not inherit with the free - Galatians 4. We are free, as Isaac was, and the free is placed as heir. If one is not free, one cannot inherit.
Because we are in Christ, we have been predestinated, we have been called, we have been justified, and we have been glorified. We are now being glorified, but that will only be revealed in the future. These four concepts are therefore added together. We have part in that. What more could be added to it?

Romans 8:31
What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?
What more is there to say? Very little, really, and so Paul now describes the status quo, the situation in which we now find ourselves. He has nothing to add, and so he simply asks questions.
If God be for us, who can be against us? drawn from Numbers 14:8. No one. That is also evident from the next verse.

Romans 8:32
He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
Paul first establishes that God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. God has given His Son to us. Then comes the question: How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
All things = the universe.
That is in line with what has gone before, for we share in the birthright with respect to all creatures, and therefore God gives first Christ and thereby also us, because we are in Christ, all things. We shall judge the world with Him. Moreover we shall judge angels with Him. This means that we have a position above the angels, in accordance with Hebrews 1 and 2.
That God delivered up His Son we encounter several times in the New Testament.
Galatians 1:4
Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Here it does not say “delivered up,” but “gave.” It amounts to the same thing. The prefix “up” serves only to strengthen the expression. It does not say that He gave Himself for the sins of the whole world. That may well be so, but that is not what stands here. He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. Not all people, but only believers.
The idea of “gave” or “delivered up” is on occasion even that of imprisonment. The Lord Jesus, for example, was delivered up to be crucified. That word “delivered up” implies a limitation. What is meant is that although in His resurrection Christ has been given all power in heaven and on earth, in practice He is for the time being doing a work for the church. God has set Him at His right hand and has put all things under His feet, but then it says that God has appointed Him High Priest over His house, which is the church. Christ makes use of His present position of having all power in heaven and on earth only in relation to the church. He makes use of it by drawing us out of this present evil world, which in practice still lies in the power of Satan. Legally speaking the whole world lies in the power of Christ. He is the Head, the Highest, but in practice He does nothing with it. He is longsuffering toward us, because He desires all men to come to faith. Through that longsuffering He is now doing a work exclusively for the church. Insofar as it is a work in the world, it is to draw believers out of the world. To translate us from darkness into His marvellous light; to deliver us from the power of darkness and place us in His kingdom.
He gave Himself for us for our sins. He became High Priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Because of our sins—namely because of our failures and shortcomings—God has given Christ to the church to make provision for that. He does a work in us whereby He cleanses not our flesh but our consciences, our hearts, from an evil conscience, that we might serve the living God.
Ephesians 5:2
And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
The risen Christ offered Himself, placed Himself at God’s disposal, and as it were said at His resurrection: “Behold, I am here to do Thy will, O God” - Hebrews 10:9. That does not concern His incarnation or His walk on earth in the flesh, but His present position. God appointed Him High Priest. Thereby and in Him we are sanctified. Sweetsmelling offerings always speak of resurrection life.
Ephesians 5:25–27
Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
Christ is doing in these days a work specifically and exclusively for the church. He does that work through His Word. That Word has a cleansing effect on believers. That is why the Word is presented as water and the working of the Word as a washing.
Titus 2:13–14
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

He who devotes Himself to us, who limits Himself in His work for the church. He gave Himself for our sins to redeem us from all iniquity. It is always the same thought. Actually this is exactly the same as John 3:16.
For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (that is the risen Son), that whosoever believeth in Him (that is we) should not perish but have everlasting life. He that believeth not is condemned already, but he that believeth is not condemned. This means that he who does not believe walks in darkness, but he who believes walks in the light. That therefore concerns us as believers. That is not faith in the crucified Lord Jesus, but in the risen Christ, seated at the right hand of God.
In the preceding verses of John 3 the lifted-up serpent is spoken of. That is a picture of the lifted-up Son of man. Whoever looks to Him shall be healed.
God has therefore given Christ to us, or Christ has given Himself up for us. Both are said and they obviously have the same thrust. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. Not His death. He devotes His life to the sheep. He does that only after He has gone through the door. That is a picture of His death and resurrection. He knows us by name and calls us and leads us. What does He do for the sheep? He lays down His life for them, namely, He gives them eternal life. That too concerns living the life of eternal life. It concerns practical service to the Lord.

Romans 8:32
He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
God has put all things under His feet and given Him to the church as Head. He would lead many sons to glory. God has given Him to the church as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, that He might cleanse the church, sanctify it, perfect it, present it glorious to Himself, to be manifested later with the whole church as Son to the world. God gives us Christ and thereby the universe.

Romans 8:33
Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.
What accusation against God’s elect? Who would do that? God is the one who justifies. Whether the accusations are true or not, God will not entertain them but acquit us. Moreover we have a very good Advocate = Paraclete. That word is translated in 1 John 2 as advocate. It is usually translated Comforter. It is namely the designation of the Messiah. He would send another Comforter, implying that He Himself is the Comforter, for otherwise He could not have sent another. The Paraclete is the One who pleads someone’s cause, who represents us in court. We do not appear in the dock. There is Someone who represents us there. That is Christ, and He is acquitted. He is justified. He has been graced by God.

Romans 8:34
Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
Who is he that condemneth = who would judge? There is no higher judge than Christ. God acquits; there is therefore no one to condemn. He died, but what is more, He is risen and is also supremely exalted and prays for us. That praying is the designation for His whole work as Advocate, as our Representative.

In the general and broad sense praying means serving someone. Etymologically praying means speaking aloud - producing sound. You speak aloud. But when you go to vote, you rarely speak aloud. You usually do it silently. A piano tuner would have no idea what you are talking about. Therefore it does not mean raising your voice. If praying literally means speaking aloud, then it is still a question whether it means that in practice.
Praying rather means maintaining a relationship with someone. Being accountable to someone. To someone who may call us to account, and then we must say something. We have Someone with whom we have to do. That is why the word praying is used in the Bible for our service to God. That is why we read expressions like "pray without ceasing" and "pray in all places, lifting up holy hands." That is not possible. Moreover, if it were possible, it would be contrary to what the Lord Himself said about praying. He said: "Let your words be few," for the heathen think they will be heard for their much speaking. Later it says: "Pray without ceasing." It must be clear that in one passage it speaks of what we call prayer and in the other of service to the Lord. James also says you should not say much to the Lord. You should listen. The Preacher says the same. Both petitionary and thanksgiving prayer have in practice only one meaning, namely that one acknowledges the one to whom one prays or gives thanks as one's superior.
The Lord Jesus Christ is appointed in the service of God. He represents us before God. He is the Head of service. We are priests and He is the High Priest. And our relationship with God is maintained through the Lord Jesus Christ. His ministry is designated by that one word "praying."
We live constantly in a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We always live praying, for we live from His grace, and we always live thanking, for we are thankful. He prays for us. He serves God for us, on our behalf, as our Head.

Romans 8:35
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
Words have a broad meaning unless limited by the context.
Love in the broad and wide sense of the word is fellowship, practical fellowship. Love and service are overlapping concepts in the Bible. When you love the Lord, you serve Him. The Lord loves us and therefore serves us. Because He loves us, He gave Himself up for us.
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ = who shall separate us from fellowship with Christ? When we came to faith we were added to the Lord and became planted together with Him and members of His body. The question now is: Who will undo that? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? These expressions stand here because in practice we are exposed to these things. If you know the history of Christians, you know they have always been persecuted in one way or another.

Romans 8:36
As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
Drawn from Psalm 44:22. There it concerns God's people, who pray for deliverance and complain of oppression, distress, persecution, famine, and so on. Paul says that from Psalm 44 it can already be deduced that this would happen to believers. But does that

separate us from the love of God? There are of course some, even in our days, who claim that insofar as we get into trouble, it is because we are not good Christians. That is not so. The Lord does not preserve us from these things, but He will keep us in tribulation, distress, persecution, and the like. God is not concerned that we as believers should have a prosperous life, but that we should be brought up to sonship. Those things do not separate us from the love of Christ.

Romans 8:37
Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself up for us all.
How can someone be more than a conqueror? By not even having to fight for it. That is the only situation in which we are more than Christ. He is the Conqueror and He fought for it. The captain of our salvation was perfected through sufferings, through His death and resurrection, and we simply follow Him. We do not have to fight for it; we rest in His victory. The Lord said: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." We share in that victory. In that way we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself up for us all.
Here it is established that nothing can separate us from the love of God. That is also the ultimate answer to someone who says that if you are born again you can still be lost again, in the sense that you can lose eternal life again. That rests on a misinterpretation of some Scripture passages. It is a teaching that people consider necessary to keep believers under pressure and at work: "Remember, you must do your best and I will tell you how to do it in our church. If you do not do your best, you will still be lost."
These words put an end to that. This simply cannot be lost. We have received the Spirit and He is the earnest of our inheritance. The chapter closes with firm statements.

Romans 8:38–39
For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
I am persuaded = nothing can go wrong.
None of these things will separate us, nor can separate us from the love of God. People will of course try in practice, but it will prove impossible.
It was first called the love of Christ and here it is called the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, for our fellowship with God is fixed in our fellowship with Christ. We are joined to Christ, but Christ is joined to God. God loves His Son and thereby all who have part in Him. That is the only real trinity we can find in the Bible. God and the Father are one, and the Son and those whom God has given to the Son are one. God has given believers to Christ.
He keeps those believers from the evil one. He does not take them out of the world. No one shall pluck them out of His hand and no one shall pluck them out of His Father's hand. See John 17.
That is here repeated in strong terms.
Not even death can separate us from our fellowship with Christ. This is important, because it also makes the teaching of so-called soul sleep impossible. That holds that

when someone dies he no longer exists. He sleeps, it is called, and only wakes up at the coming of Christ on the last day. That is therefore an unbiblical idea, for in that case death would separate us from practical fellowship with Christ. Paul says to depart and be with Christ is far better than to remain in the body for your sakes. If to depart meant passing into so-called soul sleep, he could have spent his time better on the Philippians than going to have a nap.
Neither death, nor life, and the things that happen to us in it, nor angels (who are quite highly placed), nor principalities, nor powers (Christ is set above principalities, angels, and powers), can do anything about it. We have a position in Christ above them and are therefore invulnerable to them. We have eternal life and share in the victory over death, for we have received that in Christ. And therefore no creature whatever shall be able to separate us from the love of God.
Separation is by definition death, but also by definition sin. We have the victory over that. In Christ we are forever joined to the living God. That is the ideal situation that should prevail in creation. We are the first to have received part in that. On that basis we have received a heavenly position. That is not, however, the subject of this epistle.
The question now to be asked is how we have received the birthright when it was promised to Israel. The next three chapters deal with that.

Chapter 9
Paul's Grief over Israel's Unbelief
We explore why the church today occupies the spiritual position and birthright originally given to Israel in the Old Testament, focusing on Paul's deep sorrow in Romans 9:1–5 over Israel's unbelief and the resulting transference of God's promises.Key Points:

1. Israel's Original Election and Birthright
   In the Old Testament, Israel was elected as God's "son" and "firstborn" (Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9), not for individual heavenly salvation but for an earthly destiny: to inherit Canaan, serve as a royal and priestly people (Exodus 19:5–6), and carry out God's work on earth. The Hebrew word for "son" also implies "builder," linking Israel to God's redemptive purposes (e.g., Psalm 118:22 – the rejected stone/sons). The birthright included adoption, glory, covenants, the law, divine service, promises, and the fathers, culminating in Christ coming "as concerning the flesh" from Israel (Romans 9:4–5).
2. The Birthright Is Transferred Due to Unbelief
   Israel (particularly the Jewish people) proved unfaithful to God's Word (Romans 3), rejecting the gospel and Christ. Paul asks whether their unbelief nullifies God's faithfulness (Romans 3:3). The answer is "God forbid!" God remains faithful and transfers the birthright to another people when the original refuses it. Scripture repeatedly shows this pattern: Esau to Jacob, Ishmael to Isaac, Reuben to Joseph, Manasseh to Ephraim, Cain to Seth, Solomon to Nathan, Adam to Christ, Old Covenant to New, Aaron to Melchisedec, Moses to Christ, old creation to new creation. The birthright is always transferred; "many first shall be last, and many last first."
3. The Church Now Holds the Birthright
   Since Christ's resurrection, the spiritual privileges (adoption as sons, glory, covenants, promises, royal priesthood) have passed to believers—primarily

Gentiles but including believing Jews—who form the church (ecclesia). Paul applies Old Testament Israel-language to the church:

- We are predestinated to adoption as sons (Ephesians 1:5).
- We are a chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9, echoing Exodus 19:5–6).
- We are Abraham's seed and heirs (Galatians 3:29).
  The church now occupies Israel's position as God's royal and priestly people, called to sonship and glory.

4. Paul's Grief (Romans 9:1–5)
   Paul is filled with "great heaviness and continual sorrow" because his kinsmen according to the flesh—Israelites—have no share in the blessings of Romans 1–8 (justification, life in the Spirit, etc.). He wishes he himself could be "accursed from Christ" if it would save them. This does not refer to past atonement but to Christ's present work of sanctification and growth to sonship in believers. Paul would forfeit that ongoing work if it meant his brethren's salvation. Yet their unbelief has caused the blessings to go elsewhere.
5. Not Replacement but Fulfillment and Inclusion
   The church has not "replaced" Israel in a crude sense; rather, it fulfills Israel's calling in this age through faith in Christ. True Israel is not defined by descent but by faith (Romans 9:6–8: "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel… the children of the promise are counted for the seed"). Gentiles who believe are grafted in (Romans 11), and the church becomes the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). Ethnic Israel retains future earthly promises (land, restoration at Christ's return), but the spiritual birthright—sonship, priesthood, glory—now rests with the church.
6. Why This Matters
   Many Christians fixate on personal salvation and miss this corporate truth. Romans 9–11 is not primarily about individual election to salvation but about who receives the corporate birthright and highest position in Christ. The church's heavenly calling and role as firstborn (Hebrews 12:23) stem from this transference. God's faithfulness is vindicated: He promised these blessings to Israel, but when unbelief prevailed, He fulfilled them through believing Gentiles (and believing Jews), forming one new people in Christ.

In summary, the text argues that the church today is spiritually "Israel" in terms of the birthright, sonship, and priestly calling because Israel's unbelief led God to transfer these privileges to believers in Christ. Paul's grief highlights the tragedy of Israel's rejection, yet God's faithfulness ensures the promises are fulfilled—not abandoned—through the church in this age.

It should strike us that the birthright, which is here ascribed to us, was already given to Israel in the Old Testament. God said to Pharaoh: "Let my people go, for Israel is my son." Later, in Jeremiah 31, it says: "Israel is my son, even my firstborn."
The election of Israel in Old Testament times was not an election to come to heaven. It was never the intention that Israel should go to heaven, but to Canaan. Israel was called for an earthly destiny in the promised land and would possess that land as an inheritance. That has never yet happened; therefore it must still happen in the future. But that is not the theme here. The theme is that God gave the birthright to Israel, but

since the resurrection of Christ it has in one way or another come to believers and therefore to the church; in other words: to the ecclesia. The question therefore is whether the church has taken the place of Israel. In asking that question, however, people have never realised what that place of Israel is and therefore what the place of the church is. That has been completely lost.
One should realise that the election of Israel has nothing to do with their individual eternal salvation and/or heavenly future. Israel was called to be God's son and to stand in the birthright, so that God's work would be carried out through that son, namely through Israel. The Hebrew word for "son" also carries the meaning of builder. A son is a builder and a builder is a son. The stone which the builders refused is the stone which the sons refused. Because it concerned the building of a structure and a stone, people have translated it with builders. That is not wrong, but you lose half the meaning. The Son of God is the Builder of God.
The people of Israel were to be used by God in His service. Whatever God would do from that time onward, He would do through Israel. History proves that too, for what God did in the past, He did through Israel.
In Romans 3 we already dealt with Israel's disobedience—at least what remained of Israel, the Jewish people. That people was unbelieving, for it was unfaithful to the Word and thereby to God's work. Then the question was asked whether their unfaithfulness would make the faithfulness of God without effect. The answer was: "God forbid!" Israel may be unfaithful, but God is faithful. And if Israel does not want to do that work of God, it will still happen. Then God simply does it through another people. That is the old story, illustrated both in the Old and New Testaments: the father has two sons and the question is which of the two receives the birthright. That is a different question from who originally had the birthright. It was Esau, but it became Jacob. It was Ishmael, but it became Isaac. It was Reuben, but it became Joseph. It was Manasseh, but it became Ephraim. It was Japheth, but it became Shem. It was Cain, but it became Seth. It was Solomon, but it became Nathan. It was Adam, but it became the last Adam, namely Christ. It was Israel, but it became the church. It is illustrative of God's work. The birthright is always transferred. Many first shall be last, and many last first. It was the Old Covenant, but it became the New Covenant. It was Aaron, but it became Melchisedec. It was Moses, but it became Christ. It was an old creation, but it becomes a new creation.
Because so many Christians are so fixated on their own uncertainty about their own salvation, they never get to these kinds of issues. This has absolutely nothing to do with whether one is born again or saved. It concerns who receives the birthright and who will share in the glory of Christ and which people will receive that highest position in Christ. If Israel is now that chosen people that was to be placed as a royal and priestly people and therefore as son, as heir and as builder of God's work, how is it then that Paul applies this to believers in our days, who are generally also from the Gentiles? The next three chapters deal with that. It will therefore be clear that these chapters are difficult to understand—not because they are so difficult, but because people think they concern how a person is saved. That is not what they are about. They concern how it is possible that the church—the gathered believers since the resurrection of Christ (and which can be regarded as one people)—has received a higher position than Israel and has indeed to a certain extent taken the place of Israel. The church now occupies that same position of royal and priestly people. People who teach that the church has taken

the place of Israel do indeed have one leg to stand on. Unfortunately they draw wrong conclusions from it.

Paul's Grief over Israel's Unbelief

Romans 9:1 - 5
I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.
For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;
Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
It is a continual grief to Paul that precisely Israel—that is, the Jewish people, who are by nature his own family—has no share in the blessings set out in chapters 1–8, which implies that those blessings have indeed come to someone else. That is a continual grief to him. He himself would wish to be accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren.
You can easily stumble over this and what does Paul say? That he would rather be lost if the Jews were thereby saved? He would rather be accursed from Christ. That expression also occurs in Galatians, where it says that if anyone seeks to be justified by the law, Christ is of no profit to him. Then you are accursed from Christ. Then you are fallen from grace. Then Christ has become of no effect to you - Galatians 5:2–5. Paul is not speaking there of Christ's work in the past, the work of reconciliation on the cross of Golgotha, but of Christ's present work.
Since people have no idea what Christ is doing now, they also have no idea what it means to be accursed from Christ, or for Christ to be of no effect or no profit to you. It concerns what Christ means to us now. Now that we are children of God, He is the One who ensures that we grow up to sonship. He has begun a good work in us and will perform it until the day of Christ. If Paul were accursed from Christ, then Christ would not do the work He does in believers upon Paul. There are countless believers upon whom that work is not done, simply because they do not want it. If you are content with the idea that He died for your sins, then the rest also stops. We should know what the Lord is doing now, so that we might submit ourselves to it. Some say it is enough for them to have a little place in heaven, but they will probably think differently when they eventually get that little place. Hebrews 12 also says you will regret it, with Esau as an example, who lost his birthright. Was he then no longer a child of Isaac? Yes he was, but no longer his firstborn. He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. He did get something and remained a child of Isaac and Rebekah, but not as firstborn. Of us it is said that we should not follow the example of Esau, for we too shall find no place of repentance - Hebrews 12:16–17.
Nevertheless Paul is willing to take that little place if his family according to the flesh were thereby saved. Of course it does not work that way, but that was his feeling.
His kinsmen according to the flesh are Israelites. He does not immediately say Jews, but Israelites, referring back to Jacob and not to Judah.

To them belongs the adoption of sons. Israel was called to sonship, but in chapter 8 he has said that we are called to sonship. In Ephesians 1:5 he says that we as believers have been predestinated unto the adoption of sons.
To them also belongs the glory. That is really the same as sonship. We are called to sonship, but also to glory, for the firstborn receives glory.
To them belong also the covenants. All the covenants God made in the Old Testament are covenants with Israel. Even those covenants made before Israel even existed. Those covenants were inherited and so came to Israel after all. God made a covenant with Adam and that covenant comes to the last Adam, an Israelite.
To them also belongs the giving of the law. The law of Moses was given exclusively to Israel. In Romans 2 it already said that Gentiles do not have the law. If they had the law, they would not be Gentiles. The law was not given to everyone, but only to Israel. Should that be regarded as a blessing? The law is a curse (Galatians 3:13 and a yoke (Acts 15:10, because no one can bear it. Nevertheless God gave His law to Israel and to no one else, and certainly not to Christians. Quite apart from the fact that He fulfilled the law 2000 years ago and moreover abolished it (Hebrews 7:18, so that whoever lives under the law does so wrongly and even contrary to the law, for the law is fulfilled and finished and we are delivered from it by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether you believe that or not.
To them also belongs the service of God. Religion in practice is priesthood, and Israel was a royal and priestly people, a people for His name. God said: “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” - Exodus 19:5–6.
To them belong also the promises, for all those promises, insofar as they might be anything other than God’s covenants, would be fulfilled through Israel. All those things were given to Israel, including those things of which Romans 8 already says that God has given them to us.
Apart from the giving of the law, everything has been given to the church. We are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, that we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light - 1 Peter 2:9. Both Paul and Peter apply statements from the Old Testament made to Israel to the church of today. No wonder there were so many theologians who said that the church has apparently taken the place of Israel. They have a point as far as the position of the church is concerned, which was to be placed as sons. But there is a problem, for what is it: shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God had given and promised it to Israel, and now it has come to the church and not to Israel? Then God is unfaithful after all. And there we come to the great traditional theological problem. Is the church Israel, or not? If people say the church is Israel, they have a problem, for the church only came into being since the resurrection of Christ. The church is a very different thing. There is a category that says the church and Israel are the same, but also a category that says the church and Israel are two different things. God promised it to Israel and now gives it to the church. God has therefore changed His mind, for He has not fulfilled His promises to Israel. And if you are a chiliast (someone who believes in the thousand years), you have learned that it will still come right with Israel, but that will only be in the future at the second coming of Christ.

Nevertheless Paul establishes that all those things he speaks of in these verses in the Old Testament were given to Israel.
The fathers = the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, for Christ came from Israel and in particular from the Jewish people.
Who is over all, God blessed for ever. He comes from Israel.
But Israel has not obtained salvation and so on. How does that work then?
Later we read that we have obtained it and the others have been hardened. Then we come to those notorious verses used in Calvinism for the doctrine of election. That holds that man does not have his own salvation in his hand. God must choose or call that man. It must be given to you (unbelievers think that since then too). That makes you apathetic and fatalistic. People go through life with a lowered level of consciousness and a lowered level of responsibility. They make no choices and stumble through life. If God wills it, it will be all right, and if He does not will it, it will not be all right. That is also Calvinism. And they cite the following verses.

Romans 9:6
But it is not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:
It was given to Israel, but who is that actually? The following verses say that God Himself determines that, and then you have the doctrine of election.
Israel is originally Jacob. So not all are Israel who are of Israel.

Romans 9:7
Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.
Abraham had two sons (ultimately eight), Ishmael and Isaac. The Jews say they are Abraham's seed, but Ishmael was also Abraham's seed, yet Israel did not come from him and the Jews do not descend from him either.
The same that applies to Abraham and his seed also applies to Jacob. He may have had twelve sons, from whom a whole people came, but the question is whether they are all Israel according to God's standards. No, for God reckons only believers to heirs. God chose Abraham in those days also on the ground of faith. He did not choose Abraham to come to faith, but on the ground that he was a believer. For by faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed (Hebrews 11:8. He was a believer and therefore God called him, and then he did what God asked of him. Abraham was therefore also obedient to the Word of God.
So it is with us too. We are not chosen to come to faith, but because we are believers. God chose Israel. This means that unbelievers were not part of it, but also that Gentiles who on the ground of faith joined Israel had part in Israel's election. Think, for example, of Ruth the Moabitess or Caleb the Kenezite. They had part in Israel's citizenship. Everything God gave to Israel, including the law, was also for the strangers within their gates.
What then is Israel? What God determines. God made His choice and that is not a choice on the ground of descent and therefore: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called (Genesis 21:12. Not: In Ishmael shall thy seed be called. God made His choice. When God says to Israel

in Exodus 19: “Ye shall be unto me a peculiar treasure,” He adds: “for all the earth is mine,” in the sense of: “all peoples are mine. I can do with them what I will.” That is why He could pick Israel out from among them. It is not about God’s sovereignty in which He determines who comes to faith and who does not. He calls us to come to faith and says that He gives eternal life to all believers, because He reckons faith for righteousness.
The conclusion from these chapters is that what God promised to Israel has indeed not come to the Jewish people, but to a Gentile people. It has, however, first come to Gentiles who were originally indeed Israelites. It has not come to the Jews, but still to Israel. Not to the two tribes, but to the ten tribes of Israel. The whole point is that when the gospel was preached to Israel, because the New Covenant had arrived (there were then still only two tribes), the Jewish people did not want it. We know that not so much because so many Jews remained unbelieving, but because the Jewish government, the Sanhedrin, under the presidency of the high priest of the Old Covenant, did not want Him. Even after His resurrection, when the gospel was openly preached, it was that same Sanhedrin and therefore officially the Jewish people that rejected the Lord Jesus. In the history of the book of Acts we find several times that the Jewish people officially through the Sanhedrin, but also abroad through the Jewish leaders in Rome, reject the gospel. Even if the majority of the Jewish people had come to faith, if the Sanhedrin says they do not want Him, then officially the Jewish people are unbelieving. The Jewish people are therefore unbelieving to this day and will remain so until the government officially calls on the name of the Lord. The Bible also says that this will happen and when, but that is not the subject now.
Salvation was therefore rejected by the Jews and therefore went to the Gentiles, and the first Gentile people that officially came to accept the Lord Jesus as the Messiah was the British people. That people descends from the ten tribes of Israel and in particular from the tribe of Ephraim. In Isaiah 42 and 49 it stands plainly that salvation went to the ends of the earth, to Finistère, to Angleterre (to the corners of the earth), namely to the uttermost west. Moreover it went to Brittannië, but you can no longer see that through the translation. For it was to go to the covenant people = brit am = brit ain = Brittannië = covenant people. Am is in Celtic “an” and therefore it is Brittannië. Salvation went to the islands in the west, mistranslated as islands of the sea. Yam = sea, but also west. Ancient church history indeed teaches that the gospel was preached in the first years after the resurrection to the ends of the earth and in particular also in the British Isles. Salvation has therefore indeed gone to Israel, but there is still rather more Israel than only the Jewish people. There are still ten tribes of Israel, of whom people either do not want to know who they are, or they are the Anglo-Saxon peoples, all those peoples called Caucasians by the Americans. Even if you do not belong to them you need not worry, for if you simply come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ you still receive part in Israel’s citizenship.
Historically it does make a difference. God has fulfilled His promises and He had promised them to Israel, but if the Jews are unbelieving, they do not belong to Israel. If a Gentile comes to faith, he does belong to Israel. God had made His promises to the Jewish people, but they did not want it. God had, however, also made those promises to Ephraim, who as a people did come to faith, and so He has still fulfilled His promises to Israel. Ultimately Romans 11 will show that it cannot be otherwise, for it stands plainly there. That is the background of the story. Sonship is only for believers and indeed for the first people that comes to faith under the New Covenant. Everyone can have part in

that. If you want to become a Jew today, you can. In the same way you can also join that people of God, namely the church. You say that your God is my God and your people my people; then you are an Israelite. God does not choose someone on the ground of descent, but on the ground of faith. But God promised it to Israel? Exactly, and if someone comes to faith, he is added to Israel.
That is why the church is indeed designated with the term Israel in Galatians 6, for example.

Romans 9:7
Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.
Paul says that you may descend from Abraham, but that does not make you his heir. Ishmael was also Abraham's seed, but he would not inherit, for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman. You may descend from Isaac, but then you are still not his heir (verse 10).

Romans 9:8
That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.
Not the natural descendants are children of God. We are not born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God - John 1:13. Those children whom God promised are counted for the seed. God had promised seed, but had not Ishmael in mind. Nevertheless Ishmael is born, but he simply does not count in that connection. As the eldest and according to the flesh he would be the firstborn, but God had arranged it differently. He promised Abraham seed and thought of Isaac and said therefore: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." That is why the majority of Abraham's descendants are designated with the name Isaac. Those are the Saxons = sons of Isaac. The Anglo-Saxon peoples and before them the Celts are indeed descendants of the ten tribes of Israel.

Romans 9:9
For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.
For this is what I promised...
Not Hagar would have a son, but Sarah. In both cases it is from Abraham, but the Lord did not think of Ishmael from Hagar, but of Isaac from Sarah.

Romans 9:10
And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;
From Abraham onwards it is not about Ishmael, but about Isaac. Then Isaac had two sons, and from the same mother too.

Romans 9:11
(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)Their works had nothing to do with it. They had done nothing yet.

Romans 9:12
It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.
In other words, Esau was born first, but Jacob received the birthright. God had already said that before they were born, so Jacob could have spared himself his tricks. He took all the trouble to get the birthright, but he need not have done so at all, for God had promised it to him anyway.

Romans 9:13
As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
Romans 9:5
Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
That statement only appears in the last book of the Bible (Malachi 1:2. In biblical language “hate” means to set aside or treat as secondary. It is far less negative than in modern English.
God therefore preferred Jacob and set Esau aside. Did Esau then receive nothing? Yes, he received something too, but Jacob received the birthright.
Neither had done anything to earn it. Here it is demonstrated that God Himself chooses. Man can add nothing to it or take anything from it. Referring back to the preceding chapters, which concern our eternal salvation—well, God chooses every believer. That is why we come to faith: to have part in that election. In Christ, and only where we are in Him, we have been chosen before the foundation of the world and predestinated unto the adoption of sons.

Romans 9:14
What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.
Is there then unrighteousness with God? Absolutely not, but God decides for Himself. He is the One who determines.

Romans 9:15
For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Romans 9:16
So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.
It therefore does not depend on the one who wills or on the one who runs (someone who tries hard), but on God who shows mercy. In other words, you may want to be saved, you may think that by works you can have part in that salvation, as many people think, but the Bible says that does not help you one bit. God has said to whom He gives that salvation: to believers, namely. The first believers from the resurrection of Christ until the rapture of the church are called the body of Christ. That body is promoted as a people of firstborn to sonship. That is what we owe our heavenly position to. Heaven is not the hereafter, and nowhere in the Bible does it say that someone will go to heaven in the future. The hereafter is a new creation, a new earth, on which the believing man will dwell in the future after the last day. There is, however, one exception to the rule: the

first believers from the resurrection until His coming are promoted to heaven. Our heavenly position belongs to the birthright of the church.
That is why we are called a church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. That heaven is called in the Bible the heaven of old. It is therefore at least 6000 years old, but probably much older. It is a higher position than the earthly one. That has been given to all believers, and they receive that position the moment they come to faith. That is why we as believers are citizens of heaven and have our citizenship in heaven. There an inheritance also awaits us. We are not going there; in the future we are only going away from here. It is not about whether we understand this, but that the Bible teaches it this way. God has raised us up together with Christ and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ. That is our position. It does not depend on our willing or our efforts, but on the electing God, who says that He gives eternal life to all believers. The first of them He promotes to heaven. It does not depend on the one who wills, nor on the one who runs, but on God who shows mercy. He determines for Himself on whom He has mercy. That is the believers.

Romans 9:17
For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.
God still has much more to do than merely justify sinners. He would also show His power and declare His name throughout all the earth. He does that through Pharaoh. He has mercy on whom He wills, but He also hardens whom He wills. That is a controversial text within Calvinism, for people like to say there that some do not come to faith because God hardens them. In evangelical circles people even say you need not preach the gospel to the Jews, because God has hardened them. They will not come to faith anyway.
God hardened Pharaoh's heart. When the first request was made to Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go, Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Then came the first plague. God did not harden Pharaoh's heart; he did it himself. Also at the second request Pharaoh's heart was hardened, after which the second plague followed. At the third request Pharaoh hardened his heart, whereupon the third plague followed. At the fourth time Pharaoh's heart grew stiff, whereupon the fourth plague followed. At the fifth time Pharaoh again hardened his heart, whereupon the fifth plague followed. At the sixth time Pharaoh's heart was hardened, as if he no longer did it himself, but as if it happened automatically. Pharaoh did not do it himself, but his heart did it. Thereupon followed the sixth plague. Only at the seventh request did the Lord harden Pharaoh's heart. How the Lord did that is not stated, but in other Scripture passages it is stated how that works. If someone turns away from the Word of God and thus hardens his heart, and if he does that repeatedly, it becomes automatic, until eventually it happens by itself. Every time the Word of God is spoken to him, it results in his heart being hardened. Who does that then? The Lord Himself. When He speaks, that simply happens. He does not do it right at the beginning, but it is the result of man's unbelief. Nowadays there are also many people who know the gospel from front to back and have made it a habit to reject it. If you preach the gospel to them, it does nothing to them. On the contrary! And every time they are confronted with it, their heart grows harder. That has happened to an individual man, but it has also happened to the Jewish people. It is

not the Lord Himself who hardens them; they harden themselves and repeatedly say they do not want it and therefore do not listen to it. At a certain point people become a kind of allergic, even to the name Jesus. So much so that if a Jew comes to faith, he still does not want to hear the name Jesus, if only because it is Greek and not Hebrew. Then it becomes Jeshua. Then one becomes a Messianic Jew, to avoid the name Jesus.
So only at the seventh time was Pharaoh's heart hardened by God. The Lord knew this would happen and therefore raised him up, that He might show His power in him. After that a whole people was delivered from slavery in such a way that the surrounding nations could still remember that event hundreds of years later and were therefore afraid of that God of Israel. That later faded away, because Israel itself became disobedient to the Lord. Later it is said that the Lord uses Old Testament Israel under the law to show His wrath and to demonstrate that works, religion, do not bring people to God, but only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does. You can also see God's wrath in it, for the Jewish people are known as God's people and call themselves that too, but look at history and around you—how has it gone with that people of God? It has gone pretty badly with that people through the centuries. That is an illustration of the wrath of God upon a people that does not want Him. But can a present-day Jew do nothing about that? Of course he can, for he can still come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he joins the church and is promoted from an earthly fatherland to a better fatherland, namely the heavenly fatherland. That is how it stands in Hebrews 11.

Romans 9:18
Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.
God chooses for Himself and has a purpose with all His works. If you want to be chosen for salvation, you come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you choose for that sonship, you surrender your life to Him and ask Him to complete His work in you. He will do that, for He has promised it. Then you have part in the Israel of God from Galatians 6, which has been promoted from an earthly to a heavenly position. That applies not only to today but for all eternity. That is God's election.

Romans 9:19
Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Romans 9:20
Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
This is drawn from Isaiah 45, but the following section from Jeremiah 18. That is remarkably interesting, partly because this sort of Scripture passages are generally unknown and secondly because they are often not examined systematically enough.

Romans 9:21
Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Romans 9:22
What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

This is again explained in the following verses. The potter can make from one lump of clay whatever he wants.
The vessel unto dishonour refers to the Jewish people, who are indeed unbelieving. Salvation is taken from the Jewish people and given to another people. That does not seem so difficult. But here it seems something very general, namely that the potter can do what he wants.
As said, this passage is drawn from Jeremiah 18, and quite a bit is said there. It is therefore interesting to read those Scripture passages. Moreover we should understand that the New Testament is in general the revelation of the Old Testament. That means that what was hidden in the Old Testament is revealed and explained in New Testament writings. Traditionally this is called reading the Old Testament in the light of the New. Ultra-dispensationalists usually do the opposite. They read the New Testament in the light of the Old. That cannot be, for the Old Testament is a shadow of the New and therefore not light itself. People do that to indicate that there is no question in Acts of building the church. To understand that you must therefore read Acts in the light of the Old Testament, to see that it concerns Israel and not the church. The New Testament, however, is decisive. It explains the Old Testament. So here too.
Jeremiah 18:1–6
The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.
Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.
And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.
Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.
In other words, the Lord is that potter. The Lord makes of Israel what He wills. He makes a vessel and spoils it and then makes from the same material another vessel. That also stands in the following verses.
Jeremiah 18:7
At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;
That cannot be misunderstood. The Lord will pluck up, pull down, and destroy a nation and a kingdom from Israel. This scene takes place in the days of Jeremiah. Those are the days when the captivity had long since begun and the majority of the Jews were in captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah himself and a small remnant of the Jewish people were still in the land of Canaan.
Jeremiah's preaching was that Jerusalem would be destroyed, which happened when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem for the third time, in 587 BC. The Jewish state would therefore indeed be plucked up and so an end would come to the two-tribe kingdom with Jerusalem as capital. In the New Testament it is again applied to the Jewish state, for after the end of biblical history Jerusalem was destroyed again in AD 70. In our days people are trying to set up such a state again.
It is about there being an analogy. First you have the potter making a vessel and spoiling it. The Lord says that this is a picture of Israel. The prophecy receives its fulfilment still in the days of Jeremiah. Ultimately it speaks of a later destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Jeremiah 18:8
If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.
Implying a restoration of that people. But that is not further entered into here.
Jeremiah 18:9
And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;
And now it concerns that other vessel, which is definitively made. Now it is not plucked up, pulled down, and destroyed, but built and planted.
Jeremiah 18:10
If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.
That is it then. These words should sink deeply into us. The usual explanation was that according to verses 7 and 8 this Jerusalem from the days of Jeremiah would be destroyed and that afterwards there would be a return from the Babylonian captivity and the temple and Jerusalem would be rebuilt. That would be verses 9 and 10. End of story. Then everything has already been fulfilled in the past. That is the usual explanation, because people do not believe in prophecies fulfilled in the future and do not believe in a future restoration of the Jewish people. But since this is quoted in the New Testament, it must mean that it will yet be fulfilled in the future and that the plucking up of the kingdom actually only happens in AD 70.
The explanation according to dispensationalism is that verses 7 and 8 apply to the past of the Jewish people. Judgment came upon it there. Verses 9 and 10 then indicate that the Jewish state will be restored in the future. Not everyone believes that, but within dispensationalism this is the most common view.
Paul in Romans 9 is not speaking about the future, but about the present. The question was who would receive the birthright. He says that it is not the Jewish people as a people, but that it goes to others. According to Romans 8 it goes to believers in our days. Paul applies it to our days. First a vessel unto dishonour that is destroyed back to a lump of clay again, and then a vessel unto honour. That vessel unto honour is not made a long time later, but at the same time. The one vessel was destroyed and in its place came the vessel unto honour. It is in one and the same movement. The instant in verse 7 and 9 seem to be the same instant. At a certain moment that people would be plucked up and pulled down and destroyed, but at that same moment God speaks concerning a kingdom that would be built and planted. Of the first it is said that if it repents God will restore it. That will also happen, for in the future the Jewish people will repent and will be restored.
Verse 10 is the most difficult. It concerns the kingdom that would be built. If that kingdom does evil in the eyes of the Lord, then the good will still be taken from them. The lump of clay is Israel (verse 6). The vessel unto dishonour is according to Romans 9 and further at any rate the Jewish people. We know of them that they will yet come to faith in the future (then you are already in Romans 11, but that is still the same exposition). That is obviously in the days of the coming of Christ. Meanwhile, while salvation is taken from that people, salvation goes to the Gentiles. That is also said in the Bible, but that does not take away that according to this picture it concerns the same lump of clay from which the Jewish people was made. But now from that same lump another people has been made. And if it is not the Jewish people, then there is

little else but that this other vessel is therefore the other part of Israel, namely the ten tribes, which would be built and planted. That has also happened. Salvation was taken from the Jewish people and given to believers, but fundamentally and legally it was given to the ten tribes of Israel. The other house of Israel and indeed at the same moment. Of them it can be said: “But if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.”
If that other people to whom salvation is given is the church (in practice it is the church) and the church does evil in the eyes of the Lord, then the Lord will in practice take the blessings from the church. That simply cannot be. God’s gifts and calling are without repentance and we are forever joined to Christ. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, only on the basis of faith and so on. Who would do anything against that? No one. God therefore not either. That reasoning therefore does not hold.
We eventually arrive in this exposition at Romans 11, where another picture is presented to us, namely of two olive trees, whereby branches from the wild olive tree are grafted into the tame one and thereby receive the blessings of the tame olive tree. But it plainly says there that if those branches do not continue in unbelief, they will be broken off. That therefore cannot be the church, for the church simply cannot be broken off. It is also not about the church. The church is the fruit on that tree. The church formally and legally, according to right, does not arise from the Jewish people, but from the ten tribes of Israel. That is also pictured here in Romans 9. If those ten tribes do not continue in faith, they will be broken off. The only problem in the story is that we were never taught at school what happened to those ten tribes. The world holds the truth in unrighteousness. God has even made use of that. He can beautifully do His work without anyone thwarting Him in it. They simply do not notice. If we know how it is, we know where salvation has come. Not to the Jews, but to the Gentiles and in particular to those Gentiles who descend from the ten tribes of Israel.
God does a work whereby He does not give the birthright to the Jewish people, but still to Israel, but then to Ephraim. He had also promised it to him.
The birthright was intended for Israel, but within Israel it was again given to the tribe of Ephraim. They disappeared with nine other tribes into the Assyrian captivity. But they went into that captivity with the promise of birthright. And when the gospel was rejected in Jerusalem, it went in those same days to Samaria, went straight to Brittannië and there it came to Ephraim (Samaria is a picture of that there). Where the Sanhedrin rejected the gospel, it was the kings of the Britons, Arviragus and Caradoc, who officially came to faith in the Lord Jesus and declared their kingdom a Christian kingdom, insofar as such a thing can exist. In one way or another that promise to Ephraim had to be fulfilled sometime and that therefore happens in our days.
While the one kingdom was plucked up, the other kingdom was planted.
Back now to Romans 9.

Romans 9:21
Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Romans 9:22
What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:
Romans 9:5
Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
The Jewish people. We only really encounter that people at the earliest after the division of the kingdom into the two and the ten tribes, whereby the two tribes are then called the Jewish people. But in truth we only truly meet the Jewish people after the captivity. It is only in the captivity that there is any mention of the Jews (think, for example, of the story of Esther and the accompanying hatred of the Jews). That was in the captivity and afterwards at the return from captivity.
Moreover, all the handbooks state that when the Bible speaks of the Jews, it does not mean the descendants of Judah, but the adherents of the Jewish religion. Read, for example, the Gospel according to John. If you read that, you would not think that John was a Jew. The way he speaks of the Jews is distant and rather derogatory, because in his eyes they are foolish; it does not suggest that he himself was a Jew. Yet he was. He was not exactly an adherent of Judaism. No more than the Lord Jesus. He was at odds with the Jewish—and therefore religious—leaders. In the Bible a Jew is someone who lives under the Jewish laws. The Jewish people are therefore the Jewish people because they practise Judaism. That people only arose in the Babylonian captivity, for it was there that the Babylonian Talmud was developed, which to this day forms the basis of Judaism. That is why most theologians say that it was only then that the Old Testament was written. The creation story would then also have been copied from some Babylonian creation story.
People therefore know perfectly well that Judaism does not have its origin with Moses, but in the Babylonian captivity. From there they returned to the land of Canaan, with Judaism, and throughout the whole Bible the Lord has not one good word for it. The Lord Jesus did say that they ought to keep the law of Moses, but that does not mean He said anything in favour of Judaism. He even said that if they kept the law of Moses, they would also listen to Him. Then they would believe in Him, for Moses spoke of Him. He said: “You trust in Moses, but Moses will judge you. You have made your own laws so as not to have to keep the laws of Moses.” Those statements are clear enough. The Lord has never had one good word for it. Moreover: “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” In the Old Testament the Lord already said that He did not desire their sacrifices. When they asked the Lord, now that they had returned from the Babylonian captivity, whether they should cease certain practices, the Lord said: “You did not ask Me whether it should be done; then do not ask Me now whether you should stop it” (Zechariah 7:3–7. The Lord wanted nothing to do with it.
The tragedy of the Lord Jesus, even humanly speaking, is that He absolutely did not conform to Judaism. This is in contrast to what is sometimes taught, namely that He kept the law. If that were so, the Pharisees would not have been so against Him. He had nothing to do with the law. The law was no means of salvation, and the Jewish law least of all. He called the orthodox Jews a generation of vipers. Later it is also said that Judaism did not bring the Jews to Christ. Stronger still, it made them unbelievers. The

Jewish people are a religious people, and the Lord has never had one good word for it. That is what it is about. That is what is brought forward here.
What then is the purpose of the Jewish people? What was it there for? That stands here: God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known. The same God endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Later Peter writes that the Jewish people stumbled over the Stone, to which they were also appointed. That too was the intention. For God still has much more to do than merely save sinners. God's work is not only soteriological. God Himself has something to prove. Namely, Himself. Where all those attributes of God are called into question, to such an extent that people even doubt whether He exists at all, He has much to prove, and He does so in the history of salvation. People say that God does nothing about it and that all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. God does not judge, does He? But then you do not know history. There would be a judgment on the Jewish people, and the fact that the Jews to this day are scattered among the nations and to this day have great difficulty maintaining themselves in the land proves that God judges. People simply do not want to see it. Instead they pretend that it is God's work to give them with difficulty a small place among the Arabs and Mohammedans, and they call it a wonder of God. That is foolishness. It demonstrates the opposite. To that it was appointed. Why? So that it might be demonstrated to them that religion brings a man nowhere, at any rate not to God or to Christ. If a man lives under laws he must keep, then faith no longer matters. Then faith and truth are concepts people no longer know at all. They would certainly not ask about them. If you ask about truth in orthodox Christianity, you are immediately regarded as an unbeliever. Then they think you dare to question the truth, while you are only asking about the truth. Why this and why that? Then it concerns biblical subjects. They immediately start praying for you, because you are an apostate. Religion brings man nowhere, and therefore no flesh shall be justified before God by the works of the law. It brings man to stubborn unbelief and hardening of the heart. That is generally illustrated in the history of Israel and in particular in the history of the Jewish people. Before the captivity they did not want to live under the law; after the captivity they did, but then in their own system. And where does it end? Nowhere. God has condemned it, and everyone can see it. It is a visible example for all mankind, and so it was already announced in the Old Testament. They would become a proverb, a byword. The ever-wandering Jew, who belongs nowhere and is always threatened. Just like Cain. It is therefore the mark of Cain. He is a type of the Jewish people. Persecuted, yet not exterminated. It continues to exist, but at the same time everyone can see that it lives under the judgment of God. To that it was appointed, and that is what God demonstrates. For the rest it applies that everyone who uses his reason and reads his Bible learns that the law brings man nowhere. He should therefore immediately give it up and appeal to the grace of God, which by the way has been abundant over all mankind, for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. From that one should live. History is also full of Jews who read their Bible and concluded that you are not saved by the law but by grace. Thus they found the Lord and thereby still received part in the blessings of the birthright. Not because they were Jews, but because they came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:23
And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,
Those vessels too were prepared beforehand. In general it refers to the church, but fundamentally and legally to the ten tribes of Israel. That is also evident from the following section. Two Scripture passages are quoted for one and the same truth.

Romans 9:24
Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Romans 9:25
As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

Romans 9:26
And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.
These are two different quotations from Hosea.
Hosea 1:2
The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.
Hosea is a type of the Lord, and since the Lord is married to a harlot, Hosea too should be married to a harlot.
Hosea 1:3
So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.
Hosea 1:4
And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.
Jezreel = the Lord will scatter.
Hosea is a picture of the Lord Himself. Gomer is a picture of Israel. The children born of their marriage are a picture of different generations in the history of Israel.
The first is therefore called Jezreel = Jehovah will scatter.
Hosea 1:6
And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.
Lo = not;
Ruhamah = mercy; beloved (thus translated in 1 Peter 2:10.
Hosea 1:8–9
Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.
Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

Lo = not;
Am = people;
Ammi = my people.
Not my people. In the New Testament it says: no people.
Judgments are announced upon Israel, but in verse 10 it says...Hosea 1:10
Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.
Israel shall be as the sand of the sea = a reference to the promises to Abraham. In the place where it was said to them that they are Lo-Ammi, it shall be said to them that they are children of the living God. In what place is that? In what place was it said to them: "Ye are Lo-Ammi"? We do not know. The point is therefore that the expression "in the place" does not necessarily indicate a location, for it can also indicate a point in time. At the moment when it is said to them that they are not God's people, at the same point in time it is said to them that they are children of the living God. This is quoted in Romans 9. The idea is therefore that at the same moment when it is said to one part of Israel (the Jewish people) that they are not God's people, to the other part of Israel (the ten tribes) it is said that they are children of the living God.
The Jewish people are according to Romans 9 and 1 Peter 2 not God's people, but to us it has been said that we are sons of the living God. Are we not built up to be a priestly people, a holy nation, a peculiar people? Are we not that house of God from Hebrews 3? To Ammi (the Jewish people) it was said: "Ye are Lo-Ammi," but to Lo-Ammi (the ten tribes) it is said: "Ye are Ammi."
If you say that we have become Ammi, that is not incorrect, but before this people became Ammi, it was Lo-Ammi. Thus the ten tribes are declared God's people. At the moment when the one kingdom was to be plucked up and destroyed, another kingdom was to be built and planted, from the previous prophecy. One part of Israel is rejected and the other part of Israel is restored. It therefore happens at the same moment.
Should that not be sufficient argument, we always have Isaiah 8 still.
Isaiah 8:14
And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
The translators have made rather a mess of it. It actually says: And He shall be for a sanctuary and for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
A sanctuary is a holy thing, something holy.
He shall be for a sanctuary and for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. For the one house He shall be for a sanctuary and for the other house of Israel a rock of offence.
This too is quoted in 1 Peter 2. The Jewish people stumbled over the Stone. The Stone is Christ. The Jewish people as an unbelieving people have struck against the stone of stumbling. That is one side of the story.
Then = at some time.
He shall also be for a sanctuary. That is obviously not the same as the stone of stumbling. That is the opposite. The Lord is therefore two different things for the two different houses of Israel. For the Jewish people He is the stone of stumbling. Then for the other house of Israel, the ten tribes, He must be a sanctuary. It is not quite stated,

but you have no other possibility. The stone of stumbling changes into gin and snare and refers to the Jewish people, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This would happen at the same time. Isaiah 8 also concerns a believing remnant. That would always be there. The following section in Romans 9 is also about that.

Romans 9:27
Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:
Isaiah does not merely say it; he cries it. He says it with force. This is a quotation from Isaiah 10:22. In the preceding verses it is described that the Lord would bring a judgment on Israel, a fire that would consume one thing and another. The fire would burn up a great part of the forest and the fruitful field. That speaks of the judgment as it has at any rate come upon the Jewish people.
Isaiah 10:19
And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.
Whenever the Bible speaks of a child, it is always a type of Christ. The idea is that it is someone from a later generation. A child would write them. There are not so many who remain. The meaning of a remnant is that it always concerns a minority.
Isaiah 10:20
And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
What was first called the remnant is then called the escaped. Thereby you have two of the four words used in the Hebrew of the Old Testament to designate this remnant. The remnant consists of the escaped.
The house of Jacob = Israel.
Isaiah 10:21
The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.
Isaiah 10:22
For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.
Paul quotes from Isaiah 10:22. In the preceding verses it is described that the Lord would bring a judgment on Israel, a fire that would consume one thing and another. The fire would burn up a great part of the forest and the fruitful field. That speaks of the judgment as it has at any rate come upon the Jewish people.

Romans 9:27
Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Romans 9:28
For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

Romans 9:29
And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

The descendants of Abraham and Isaac would become as numerous as the sand of the sea and as the stars of heaven, and so reference is made to those promises. Although those promises were made to Israel and the people are numerous, yet only a remnant—a minority—will have part in the fulfilment of those promises. For those promises are fulfilled only to the believers of that people. Only a remnant will return to the mighty God from verse 21.
On righteous grounds a consumption comes upon the majority of the people. God has decreed it firmly. They shall by no means escape - Daniel 9:27, in connection with the great tribulation (see also 1 Thessalonians 5). It concerns a judgment that would come upon Israel from the moment they rejected the Lord Jesus, until the moment when they will yet receive Him and therefore call upon the name of the Lord. That moment is at the end of the great tribulation, but the judgment has already begun from the resurrection of Christ. From then the light was taken from Israel and the whole world. Since then the Lord no longer appears. He hides Himself and makes Himself known only to believers. That is why after His resurrection He appeared only to believers. Only when the Jewish people at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel call upon the name of the Lord will the Lord appear to them again. By that time the destruction is complete. Then the Jewish state is destroyed and Jerusalem likewise. Even then, at the end of the seventieth week, there is only a remnant. That is the remnant that will literally be able to flee from Jerusalem, right through the cleft Mount of Olives, to that reserved place in the wilderness, namely Petra. It will also be clear that the remnant in those days is a different remnant from the remnant in our days. The remnant in our days forms the church of firstfruits, and the remnant of the Jewish people at the end of the seventieth week is only after the rapture of the church and therefore no longer belongs to the church. They will then together with the gathered believers from the ten tribes have the birthright above the other peoples on earth. They on earth, we in heaven. That is the difference.
Nevertheless, the principle remains the same: only a remnant is saved.
In Isaiah 1 it also concerns a judgment on Israel. In verse 3 it says that Israel has no knowledge and that My people do not understand. They understand nothing.
Hosea says...
Hosea 4:6
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.
Here it is therefore announced that Israel would be dismissed from the priestly office, so that it would indeed no longer be Ammi but Lo-Ammi. That is what Romans 9–11 is about. We, as believers in our days, as a people of firstfruits, have received that priestly office, for we are that priestly people. The oracles of God were committed to the Jews, but the priestly office has been taken from them, so that it has come to the church. That was therefore announced in Hosea 4, but it was at least hinted at in Isaiah 1:3. The people have no knowledge and do not understand. They have rejected the Word of God and therefore: “Woe to the sinful nation.”
Isaiah 1:7
Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers

Isaiah 1:8
And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.
This concerns a remnant that is saved and escapes the judgment of God.
Isaiah 1:9
Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.
From Sodom, by the way, a remnant was also saved.
Isaiah 1:10
Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.
Sodom had long ceased to exist in the days of Isaiah, just as Gomorrah had. Yet he uses those terms, but addresses Israel. He calls them Sodom and Gomorrah. In Revelation 11 Jerusalem is designated as Sodom, the city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, because both Sodom and Egypt once came under judgment, whereby it is announced that Jerusalem will yet come under judgment. Back to Romans 9.

Romans 9:27
Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Romans 9:29
And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.
This is that text from Isaiah 1. The remnant of which Isaiah speaks is indeed the church, but it applies equally to the remnant at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel. It is in line with one another.
It is remarkable that the expression “the LORD of hosts” (Jehovah Sabaoth) is used. Normally it is the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or the LORD, the God of Israel, but now He is called the LORD of hosts. Hosts is not only the designation of Israel, but of all the peoples of the earth. It is therefore a rather threatening term for Israel when the Lord calls Himself the LORD of hosts. In Romans 3 the question was already asked whether God is the God of the Jews only, or also of the Gentiles. Yes, also of the Gentiles, for there is one God. When it speaks of a remnant that is saved and that is said by the LORD of hosts, one may fear that that remnant does not so much come from the Jews, but more from the Gentiles. That is why you frequently find the LORD of hosts in, for example, Zechariah and the other prophets after the captivity, in which it is expressly announced that the Messiah will indeed come, but the people He will gather come not so much from the Jewish people, but from the Gentiles, from the hosts therefore.
In verses 27 and 29 it speaks of the remnant, and between them stands verse 28...
Romans 9:28
For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.
In the first place this verse says that God does something in righteousness. That means He acts in accordance with His Word. He acts in accordance with right, and right is all right as it is written. We already discussed this in Romans 3. Israel does not keep the

Word of God, but what does God do now? Is God unrighteous? No, He is not unrighteous; He keeps to His Word. That too is what Paul demonstrates here. That is why he refers strongly to various Old Testament Scripture passages, where indeed it is indicated that only a remnant would be saved and that the fulfilment of God's promises suddenly comes to another category. Not to the vessels of wrath, but to the vessels of mercy; not to Ammi, but to Lo-Ammi, who suddenly becomes Ammi. God has recorded that in the Old Testament, for church truth is fixed in Old Testament prophecies. Moreover, the work God is doing now on the one hand has to do with cutting short, but also with finishing. He finishes a work and cuts a work short. He does that in righteousness, namely in accordance with His Word.
Which work does He finish then? Suggesting that there is a work that was cut short, but nevertheless is finished by Him, and a work that was not cut short, but now is indeed cut short by Him. The work He cuts short is the work of Ammi, for from Ammi He makes Lo-Ammi, referring to the Jewish people. The cut-short work refers to Lo-Ammi, namely the ten tribes of Israel, which He will finish. He makes Lo-Ammi yet Ammi. The whole story is only completed at the end of Romans 11, when it is said that what is now Lo-Ammi will become Ammi, namely that the Jewish people will yet become God's people in the future. Then both parts of the people have at some time been cut short and both are yet finished. In our days the Lord is therefore doing a cut-short work with regard to the ten tribes of Israel, from which He forms the church. In general that will be a minority, a remnant.

Romans 9:30
What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.
Gentiles = non-Jews.
The Gentiles did not seek righteousness. They did not seek the law, the Word of God. Behind the word "Gentiles" you can now therefore fill in "the ten tribes of Israel." They have never in any way been Jews. They have obtained righteousness, but the righteousness which is of faith, for God reckons faith for righteousness. The Gentiles never tried to keep the law; that also makes them Gentiles, just as a Jew who does not keep the law also becomes a Gentile. They therefore have not obtained the righteousness which is of the law, but that which is of faith.

Romans 9:31
But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.
The law of righteousness is not the law of righteousness, but is the law, namely righteousness. Law is right and right is law. The Jewish people did seek righteousness, but did not attain to it. It is like the man who searched for his watch under a streetlamp in the evening. He had not lost it there, but a bit further on, only it was dark there and so he searched under the streetlamp. He was looking in the wrong place. Many people do that and often consciously too. They know they will find nothing, but keep searching, yet actually they do not want to find anything either. That is the curse of Judaism, that people do not want to find. If they expect the Messiah, they know the Messiah puts an end to Judaism. They do not want that and therefore prefer to keep expecting the

Messiah rather than finding Him. And if someone comes who seems to be the Messiah, it is: “Away with Him. We will not have this man to reign over us.”

Romans 9:32
Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;
Why did the Jews not find the righteousness which is of faith? Because they sought it in the wrong place. They sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. They thought they could be justified by works of the law, but one would be justified by faith in the law. The law is not merely the collection of commandments. If the word “law” is not further explained and therefore not limited, then it is the designation of the complete collection of Old Testament Scriptures. If it says “the law and the prophets,” then it is divided in two, but it can also be divided into the law, the psalms, and the prophets, but if only “the law” stands, then it is the whole Old Testament, the Tanakh.
People would believe the Word of God, and then they could also have seen that in Genesis it already said that faith is reckoned for righteousness.
The Gentiles found that, but the Jews sought to be justified by works of the law. The result is that they stumbled at the stumblingstone, namely Christ.
The stumblingstone is, if you take it broadly, the teaching that you are justified by faith. That is evident from the context. But if you want to say it more briefly, then that Stone is Christ. The Jews are so attached to their own system and their own identity that they want to preserve, that they stumble over the Messiah. But a wise man builds his house on the Rock.

Romans 9:33
As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.
This is a quotation from three different texts.
A stone of stumbling for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but a sanctuary for the other house of Israel. We also find that in Isaiah 28.
Isaiah 28:16
Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.
It does not say that this is a rock of offence. It is the same stone as from Isaiah 8. A stone is always the figure of Christ. Whether it is the stone that must be removed from the well to open the spring (the spring stands for the promises of God), or the stone for the grave that had to be rolled away from the grave, or the stone from Daniel 2, a stone cut without hands that fills the whole earth. But also when it says: “They have forgotten the Rock that begat thee,” then it is the same Stone. Or it is the fifth stone from the brook with David.
The precious corner stone = Christ, who as it were rises above the ground. It is a precious stone, for it speaks of the eternal life of Christ in His resurrection.
Then it says: “he that believeth shall not make haste.”
Make haste = to act actively. Literally it means to run hard.
He that believeth will not run too hard away from that Stone. He will rather build on that precious Stone.

Make haste = to panic and flee. He that believeth will not panic and flee, or lash out wildly.
He that believeth shall not be ashamed is a quotation from Isaiah 45:24.
Isaiah 45:24
Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.
All that are incensed against the Lord shall be ashamed. They will perish. If you are ashamed, you do not get something. But everyone that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. In Isaiah 41 it is stated a little more fully. God makes promises to the believing remnant.
Isaiah 41:10
Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
Isaiah 41:11
Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.
The believers are not ashamed, but those incensed against this believing remnant are. If one is ashamed, one becomes as nothing and will perish.
Isaiah 41:12
Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.
They will simply no longer be there. A thing of nought = not a thing = nothing.
Those incensed against the Lord will be ashamed, become nothing; they will be sought but cannot be found. But everyone that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.
In 1 Peter we find the same thought as in Romans 9–11, only much shorter.1 Peter 2:6
Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.“
He that believeth on him shall not be confounded” does not stand in Isaiah 28, for there it said that he that believeth shall not make haste. That is another thing. Peter here uses the same construction as Paul in Romans 9 and also joins those verses from Isaiah 28 and 45.
1 Peter 2:7–8
Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.
They were not appointed to be disobedient, but the disobedient were appointed to stumble over the Stone and therefore to be ashamed.
1 Peter 2:9
But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
Here Peter applies the terms used in Exodus 19 to designate Israel to the church. You therefore find exactly the same story here. Two categories, of which one stumbles over the Stone and the other believes in that Stone and is not ashamed. That category has suddenly become Israel.

1 Peter 2:10
Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.
It strongly appears that Peter, before he wrote even one epistle, had first read all the epistles of Paul. He says something like that in 2 Peter 3:15–16. Some things therein are hard to understand, for they are wrested by unlearned and unstable men, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Nevertheless Peter expressly refers to all the epistles of Paul.
It is now clear who those two categories are. On the one hand the unbelievers, with emphasis on the Jewish people, and on the other hand the believers, with emphasis on the ten tribes of Israel.
What Paul has said in these last verses of Romans 9 should not escape us, namely that one should believe and that is what it is about. That is to say, it is not all Israel that is of Israel, but only those who believe are Israel. He now continues on that, that it is a matter of faith. But of course that was already set out in chapters 1–8.

Romans 10:1
Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.
Paul's heart's desire and his prayer to God are for their salvation—the salvation, that is, of the Jewish people. That is what he prays for. This is an important detail, but what exactly does he pray for? The question is what God can do about it, or how Israel can then be saved. By faith. What then can God do about it? Give them faith? Faith is not given to you. Faith is not a gift of God, at least not in the general sense of the term. Faith is the responsibility of man. So what can God do about it? The first answer is nothing. The second answer is an answer to the question of how a person then comes to faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. In other words, the only thing God can do is ensure that the word of God is preached to them. If therefore one prays for the salvation of someone in general, or of the Jew in particular, as here, then that is a prayer to God that He would send His word to him.
Such a prayer is in itself rather hypocritical if one is not willing to go and preach that word oneself. Such a prayer sounds fine and is certainly to be recommended, but that does not alter the fact that such a prayer is not so sincere if one does not make oneself available to go and preach that word. That is what Paul prays for. It only takes a whole page or more before he says that explicitly too. In Romans 11:14 he asks whether he might in any way provoke his own flesh to jealousy and might save some of them. He makes himself available to preach the gospel to the Jews. And that is indeed what he did frequently. Wherever he went he first sought out the Jews. He preached to the Jews, but the Gentiles came to faith.
So let no one say that a Jew cannot come to faith, or that their hearts are hardened. That is not how it is. One should rather preach the gospel to the Jews, and that is precisely what the apostle did.
A Summary of Paul's Continued Concern for Israel's Salvation
Romans 10 continues Paul's deep anguish over Israel's (the Jewish people's) unbelief, building on Romans 9. While Romans 9 explains why the birthright and promises have transferred to believers (the church), Romans 10 focuses on how Israel can still be saved and why they have not been—despite zeal, they have sought righteousness in the wrong way.

Paul's heartfelt desire and constant prayer is for Israel's salvation (Romans 10:1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"). He prays that God would send preachers to them, because salvation comes only through hearing and believing the gospel.

Key Points and Progression

1. Israel's Zeal Without Knowledge
   Paul testifies that the Jews have genuine zeal for God (Romans 10:2), but it is "not according to knowledge." They are ignorant of God's righteousness (the righteousness that comes by faith) and seek to establish their own righteousness through works of the law (Romans 10:3). They have not submitted to God's way of righteousness.
2. Christ as the End/Goal of the Law
   The law's purpose was always to lead to Christ (Romans 10:4: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"). Christ fulfills and terminates the law's dominion as a means of righteousness. Whoever believes in Him will not be ashamed.
3. Contrast: Righteousness of Law vs. Righteousness of Faith
   - Law (quoted from Moses, Leviticus 18:5): "That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Romans 10:5). But no one can perfectly do them.
   - Faith (quoted from Deuteronomy 30:12–14): Do not say, "Who shall ascend into heaven?" (to bring Christ down) or "Who shall descend into the deep?" (to bring Christ up from the dead) (Romans 10:6–7). The word is near—in your mouth and heart (Romans 10:8).
     Salvation is simple: confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9). Heart belief leads to righteousness; mouth confession leads to salvation (Romans 10:10). This echoes Deuteronomy 30's call to Israel's future conversion: choose life by heart obedience (faith), not works.
4. No Difference Between Jew and Greek
   Salvation is for "whosoever" calls on the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13, quoting Joel 2:32). There is no distinction: the same Lord is rich to all who call on Him (Romans 10:12). Jew and Greek (Gentile) stand on equal ground—faith alone.
5. The Necessity of Preaching
   How can people call on Him if they have not believed? How can they believe if they have not heard? How can they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10:14). Preachers must be sent (Romans 10:15, quoting Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15): "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The gospel must be proclaimed orally—the word is powerful when spoken (with breath/spirit).
6. Israel Has Heard—But Not All Have Obeyed
   Yes, they have heard: "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18, quoting Psalm 19:4).
   But not all have believed: "Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:16, quoting Isaiah 53:1). Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

7. Israel Provoked to Jealousy
   Moses foretold God would provoke Israel to jealousy by a "no-people" (Gentiles/Lo-Ammi) and anger them with a "foolish nation" (Romans 10:19, quoting Deuteronomy 32:21).
   Isaiah boldly declared God was found by those who did not seek Him (Romans 10:20, quoting Isaiah 65:1).
   Yet to Israel God says: "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Romans 10:21, quoting Isaiah 65:2). Israel has continually resisted and contradicted God's word.

Paul grieves because Israel has heard the gospel, has zeal, and could be saved—but they stumble because they seek righteousness by works instead of by faith in Christ. Salvation is near, simple, and available to "whosoever" believes and calls on the Lord Jesus. The only thing God can do now is send preachers; the response is man's responsibility. Paul himself models this by preaching first to the Jews wherever he went, hoping to provoke some to jealousy and save some (Romans 11:14).The chapter underscores:

- Faith comes exclusively by hearing the preached word of God.
- Salvation is by heart belief and mouth confession of Jesus as risen Lord.
- Israel's unbelief does not nullify God's plan—He has turned to the Gentiles (including the ten tribes/Lo-Ammi) to fulfill His promises, while still stretching out His hands to disobedient Israel.

In essence, Romans 10 explains the human side of salvation: how people (Jew or Gentile) actually come to faith through the preaching of the gospel, and why Israel, despite every privilege, has largely rejected it.

Romans 10:2
For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.
Precisely to those people the gospel should be preached. People who have no zeal for God at all usually have no interest in the gospel either. At any rate they seek, only in the wrong place. One should point them to the right place.

Romans 10:3
For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.
They do not know the righteousness of God which is by faith.
They seek to establish their own righteousness by works of the law. Because God requires faith, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Why not?

Romans 10:4
For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
The end—and therefore also the goal—of the law is Christ. In Galatians 3 that is set out more fully. There it says that the Jews were kept under guard until Christ, but they would be justified by faith.
That Christ is the end of the law cannot be missed, for He is the beginning of the New Covenant. Christ, as the Seed of Abraham, is the One who brings the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, namely that man would be justified by faith. Moreover, in His

suffering and death He put an end to the dominion of the law. The law was therefore ended by God 2000 years ago. Everyone who places himself under the law does so wrongly and contrary to the law.
Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, for everyone that believeth shall not be ashamed.
After that those two principles are set over against each other. Paul even uses the statements of Moses for that.

Romans 10:5
For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.
From the preceding chapters we have long since learned that man cannot do those things. That is an impossibility and it lies in the sinful nature of man. There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 10:6
But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)These are also words of Moses. Not now from Leviticus, but from Deuteronomy 30:12.
Say not in thine heart that thou must ascend and thereby bring salvation to thyself. That is what religion generally teaches. That you must ascend, develop yourself. You must go higher to fetch one thing and another from there; figuratively speaking, to bring Christ down from above.
But say not in thine heart either...

Romans 10:7
Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)A man cannot bring Christ up from the dead. It is also much easier. You do not need to achieve something through those works, for what does it say?

Romans 10:8
But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;
Now he has come to his own preaching.

Romans 10:9
That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
Do not think that two different things stand here, although that is often how it is read. It is one and the same. They are two sentences that you should add together. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
To believe and to confess are also the same. What we believe is what we confess and what we confess is what we believe, and to make that clear we also call it a confession of faith.

Romans 10:10
For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
Again two parallel sentences. Salvation and righteousness belong together, just as mouth and heart belong together. But it is commentary on the statements from Deuteronomy 30, which speaks of the conversion of Israel.
Deuteronomy 30:1
And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,
Deuteronomy 30:2
And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;
When they are in captivity and scattered among all nations, they will come to faith.
Deuteronomy 30:11
For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.
Deuteronomy 30:12
It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?
Deuteronomy 30:13
Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?
“Beyond the sea” can therefore be horizontally the other side of the sea, but also the underside. It is not so difficult to keep the law, for...
Deuteronomy 30:14
But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.
What stands here is that one would indeed do the word of God, but not with hands and feet, not with works, for man cannot do that. One should do it with the heart and with the mouth. That is what Paul said in Romans 7. He wills indeed (with the heart), but the good that he would do (with the hands), that he does not. The good that he would do, that he does not, and the evil that he would not do, that he does. But God looks on the heart. It is not about what one does. It is about what one believes. It is about what one does with the heart or with the mouth. If you want to know whether someone is a Christian, then you should not look at what he does, but at what he says. Then you know what occupies his thoughts, what he is oriented towards. What he does comes only afterwards. Primarily it is faith.
Deuteronomy 30:15
See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;
Life is the good and death is the evil.
Deuteronomy 30:16
In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.
He says how one should do that, namely with the heart.

Deuteronomy 30:17
But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;
Not with the feet, but with the heart. One should believe in that word of God, open the heart to it. Then follows in verse 19 the call...
Deuteronomy 30:19
I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
It is a matter of choosing, not of trying something in the hope that the expedition will have a good outcome. Faith is a matter of choosing.
Paul therefore quotes these words from the law. That is important for those who think they must keep the works of the law on the ground of the law. That is not so and it never has been.
In verse 11 of Romans 10 Paul comes with a conclusion...

Romans 10:11
For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.
That is the same joining together as in Romans 9:33; two Scripture passages linked together. That is again the same as in John 3:16. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Therefore choose life, as Moses already said.
Notice that in verse 11 the emphasis is on “whosoever,” for thereby Paul returns to his subject. To whom did God make promises? To whosoever believeth. Whether one is called an Israelite or not has nothing to do with it. That here in verse 11 the emphasis lies on “whosoever” is evident from verse 12, for...

Romans 10:12
For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.
Salvation is for whosoever believeth, for there is no difference between Jew and Greek. In Romans 9:33 the emphasis is on faith, when it says that whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed, referring back to the preceding verses, namely that Israel sought righteousness by works of the law and did not do so by faith. For whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. In Romans 10:4 the emphasis should lie on Christ, for it is of course about believing in Him.
The same Lord over all. Now you are simply back in Isaiah 45, for that expression comes from there. In Isaiah 45 there is expressly a question of who the true God is.
Isaiah 45:21
Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.
Tell it forth. Take counsel together; consult together, for I have a question. Who has spoken from of old? John said: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.” In other words, God has spoken from the beginning.
Have not I the LORD? If you translate the name Jehovah, it means something like “I am.” It is therefore actually foretelling.
There is but one God, a just God. He is a God who will bring a just judgment, whether that turns out positive or negative.

That just God is also the Saviour. For there is but one God.
Isaiah 45:22
Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.
Repent.
All the ends of the earth, at least implying not only Jews but also Gentiles, for is God the God of the Jews only, or also of the Gentiles? Yes, also of the Gentiles (Romans 3:29. Jehovah is the same God as the Saviour, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord (Jehovah) Jesus Christ. For He has received the name above every name. That is the name Jehovah. God has given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. You cannot think of anything too strange, but one should be subject to Him, in whatever way. There is but one God.
Isaiah 45:23
I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.
It shall not return = it shall not be revoked. For whom shall every knee bow? According to Philippians 2 the Lord Jesus Christ. For there is no other God than He.
Isaiah 45:24
Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.
There is but one God, but everyone that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. There is but one God who is rich unto all that call upon Him, for there is no difference between Jew and Greek.
Now that Paul has set all this out, he comes again with another text. This time from Joel 2:32. That is also interesting, for that is a quotation that Peter also used in his address on the first day of Pentecost, namely…

Romans 10:13
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
Still with the emphasis on “whosoever.” That is the name of Jehovah, the name that the Lord Jesus has received, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, so that you see that both names, Jesus and Jehovah, are borne by one and the same person. If one calls upon Jehovah and He appears, then there appears Jesus of Nazareth.
From Joel 2 you can still claim that there it speaks of the end of the seventieth week of Daniel, with regard to the conversion of the Jewish people. That is true, but that does not take away that the same Scripture passage is here, as well as in Acts 2, also applied to the 2000 years that precede the seventieth week of Daniel. But it naturally applies equally to Old Testament times, for this has always been true. The Jewish people will do that as a people at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel, but Paul is not praying here that he might bring the Jewish people to the Lord, but that some of them might be saved. From that it is evident that he is not speaking of a future conversion of the Jewish people, but of the days in which we live. Some of the Jews, but also some of the Gentiles. Those “some” again implies that it indeed concerns a minority, the escaped, a remnant namely.

Romans 10:14
How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
It is of course interesting that whoever calls upon Him shall be saved, but calling upon without faith is not calling upon.
Calling upon = in practice crying for help. One simply does not ask help from someone from whom one does not expect help. One must therefore have some trust in the one upon whom one calls. That can only be if one knows Him. How shall one call upon the Lord if one does not know Him? In other words, He must first be made known. One did not really know the Lord. In general people were quick to speak but slow to hear. One should rather be quick to hear the Word of God and slow to speak oneself. Nowadays a mark of a believer is that he prays.
The Lord should be preached, with the result that one comes to trust in Him. It is about calling upon the One in whom one believes, the One whom one has come to know.
Of the same kind are the statements in the other New Testament epistles in connection with believers. One is expected to live by faith, but to that end one should come to know the Lord, or, as Paul puts it: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.” As believers we should increase in the knowledge of Him. If all is well we are occupied with that all our life. Coming to know Him is the result of studying the Word of God.
How shall they hear without a preacher? Paul points to the necessity of preaching the gospel. We too have come to faith because the gospel was preached to us. That is also the normal way in which the word is spread. Not in writing, but orally. It is also a modern misconception that things are only true when they are written. If they are not written, we say that they are legends or myths, which perhaps form part of prehistory. Then it is claimed, but there is no ground for it. One means that it is said, but it is nowhere written. But someone only needs to write it down once and then it is written. In the Bible the norm is therefore that the word should be heard. The power of the word is much stronger than letters on paper. The word is powerful because it is spoken with breath, with spirit.
In Athens Paul is confronted with a so-called unknown god and he says that it is that unknown god whom we preach. They had not heard of Him and Paul ensures by his preaching that they hear of that unknown god. The same he did of course in all those synagogues where he went. He preached Christ and showed them who that Christ is, as He is described in the Old Testament, and then said that the description of the Messiah in the Old Testament fits Jesus of Nazareth. The gospel was preached and it had to be preached.
Now we are actually back at the beginning of the chapter, where Paul says that the desire of his heart and his prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. The question then was what Paul prayed for and what God could then do for the salvation of Israel. All that is necessary for salvation God has already done. The only conceivable thing is that God ensures that preachers are sent to Israel, so that the Lord whom they would call upon is preached. That is what Paul prays for and he makes himself available for that work.

Romans 10:15
And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!
These are quotations from Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15.
The good things are peace and vice versa. You would expect it to say: “How beautiful are the lips that preach peace.” Or the throat, the mouth or the tongue, the instruments with which man primarily serves himself. Since when do the feet have anything to do with that? It does concern preaching, but that mouth must first be brought somewhere and the feet serve for that. The feet bring the mouth to those who must hear the preaching. These statements in the Old Testament imply that peace and good things would indeed be preached, but not primarily in the land of Israel, but outside it. In other words, the preachers would have to go out by their feet to preach the message elsewhere. If that preaching is primarily a preaching to Israel, then it is a preaching abroad. That is the thrust of these two Scripture passages in the Old Testament.
The beginning of Deuteronomy 30 speaks of the ultimate conversion of Israel when the New Covenant is about to break forth. Of that conversion it is expressly said that it would happen abroad, among the Gentiles, whither the Lord would drive them. So, insofar as Israel comes to faith, it would be abroad. For that reason Paul in his days also did not preach in Judea, but to the Jews abroad. Wherever he went he first visited the Jewish synagogues and preached the gospel to the Jews. If in the future Israel officially comes to faith, it will indeed be abroad. If the Jewish people as a people come to faith at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel, it will not so much happen in Jerusalem, but in Petra. They will indeed call upon the name of the Lord in Jerusalem, but those who do so will immediately have to leave the city, through the cleft Mount of Olives to Azal = a reserved place = Petra, in the wilderness. Only there will they see the Lord as the crucified One. Only there will they believe in Him as Jesus of Nazareth, as the One who once suffered and died for them. Insofar as Israel will afterwards be gathered from all the nations to be brought into the promised land, it will first come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ abroad and on that ground will be brought to and into the land. That therefore stands in Deuteronomy 30. That truth we also find expressed here. The preachers preached especially abroad and there people come to faith.
In Isaiah 52 it says concerning the future conversion of Israel…
Isaiah 52:7
How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!
That is three times: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that:

- bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace;
- bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation;
- saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Ultimately that is three times the same. That it concerns the gospel is evident from the expression “good tidings.” The good tidings are the message that salvation, deliverance, preservation has been accomplished and that the God of Israel has become King. There is but one King of Israel, namely the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of Peace. In other words, the gospel is a message of peace, of salvation, and of kingship. Notice also that it is all in the singular here.
Of him = of the one.

“Of him” should therefore really have been written with a capital letter. It concerns the Lord Himself here. Paul quotes it in the plural. What in the first place applies to the Lord Jesus Christ applies secondarily to those who as His servants are involved in His work. The present work of Christ fundamentally consists in making His word heard. In opening the Scriptures to us. He is the One who ensures that the glad tidings of the New Covenant, those of peace, salvation, and kingship, are preached. He does that and we may, out of the riches of His grace, be involved in His work and therefore we do it too. Fundamentally it is He. God indeed in Old Testament times spoke at sundry times and in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He speaks unto us by the Son (Hebrews 1:1–2. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast… how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation - Hebrews 2:1–3?
That does not refer to the preachers, but to the Lord. After all, it is His word that is preached and therefore it is He who speaks. It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do. We should not underestimate that. That does happen and it comes because so many people interfere with the Lord’s work, as if He were not capable of it Himself. People underestimate the Lord and think He needs us and that we must do His work. He does His work and He wants to use us. Not because He needs us, but because He is gracious toward us. He fills our hands; otherwise we would stand with empty hands. He fills our lives; otherwise our lives would still be vain, namely empty. And therefore what is first singular is later plural.
In Isaiah 49 it is said to and concerning the Lord Jesus…
Isaiah 49:6
… I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.
In Acts 13 Paul applies this statement to himself. The statement was about the Lord Jesus, but Paul applies it to himself and Barnabas. He says there to the Jews that it is a pity for them that they will not come to faith, but we have more to do, for God has also set us to be a light to the Gentiles, that we should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth (Acts 13:47. Although therefore in Isaiah 49 it concerns the Lord, Paul applies it to himself and Barnabas. And rightly so, for they do the work of the Lord.
In John 10 the Lord Jesus says: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16. Does this mean that the Lord Himself would go to those sheep? Not necessarily, but it does mean that He would send His servants to them. What applies primarily to Him applies secondarily to the members of His body.
Nahum concerns the downfall of Nineveh, but Nineveh is strongly connected with the ten tribes of Israel.
Nahum 1:15
Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.
This implies that Israel will be delivered from the dominion of darkness and from the devil, for that is the wicked man (Belial’s man).Nevertheless, here again we have the beautiful feet, and again in the singular. Whose feet are beautiful and why? Mary anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus shortly before His burial. From another Scripture

passage it is clear that she also anointed His head at that time, but in the Gospel according to John the emphasis is only on the feet. The focus is therefore on His feet, and the Lord adds that this is because of His burial. One might think that it therefore has something to do with embalming, but in that case the whole body would have had to be anointed.

It concerns the feet of the Lord Jesus, which by that anointing become beautiful, which are a picture of how the Lord would go to, or how He would be preached to, those who are afar off. The beautiful feet would bring the word, the gospel, to the Gentiles, to those who are far off. Even the expression "because of my burial" applies to that, for that expression is ambiguous. We think of the burial of the Lord Jesus as Him being taken down from the cross, buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, and rising on the third day. Nevertheless the Bible connects that event with a much longer period, in which the Lord was with the rich man in his death, after which He would also rise on the third day, but that was a different day. When Hosea 6:2 says, "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight," Peter says of that that they are two days of a thousand years each. For the burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus do indeed have prophetic meaning. To the world the Lord Jesus is dead, and only in the future will He yet appear on the third day from the dead, whereby one day is as a thousand years. The world assumes that the Lord Jesus is dead and that is the end of it. He is reckoned dead to the world.

He has let go of the world and will only appear as the Risen One at His second coming. That is after two days, on the third day. In the meantime He is with the rich man in his death. That rich man refers not only to Joseph of Arimathaea, but also to us. The Lord is dead to the world, but He is somewhere. He is with us, among the Gentiles: Immanuel, God with us.

It is not about literal feet, but about the gospel being brought somewhere. It is not about literal oil, but that oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit and of the work of the Spirit. And if that is so, then it is also not about the literal burial, but about a figurative one, for in our days, in which the Lord is dead to the world, the gospel is indeed brought to and preached among the Gentiles. That is why those expressions are quoted in the New Testament. Salvation is of the Jews; it comes from there, but it has gone out from there. The expression "salvation is of the Jews" comes from John 4 and is said in connection with the Samaritan woman. There too it went from Judea to Samaria. It went from the Jews to the Gentiles, from the two tribes to the ten tribes. Salvation came to us Gentiles. That is the meaning of those beautiful feet. Thus the gospel is indeed preached to all men everywhere. The gospel is preached throughout the whole world, and the following verses say that too.

We also get commentary on the situation in our days. People usually do not want to hear that, but in reality the gospel has been preached to all nations and throughout the whole world. In the first place because this was said in the words of the Lord Jesus to the disciples: "ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8. That would be the effect of the power of the Holy Ghost that would come upon them. That has therefore happened. In Acts 17 it says: "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." One may therefore assume that this also indeed happened in those days. In Colossians 1:5–6 it says that the word of the truth of the gospel has come to the Colossians, but also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit. In other words, the word of God has been

preached to all nations. But are there not nations that have never heard the gospel? If you know what a nation is, you cannot say that so boldly. It is indeed true that whole generations of nations now have not heard the gospel, but that does not mean that previous generations of that same nation have not heard the gospel. The Bible says that the gospel has been preached to all nations throughout the whole world, and that will be correct. But then how is it that you find so little of it?

Romans 10:16
But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?
Not all, therefore, have obeyed the gospel. They have heard the gospel, but many did not want it. Not everyone has believed it. Isaiah had already established that not everyone would accept the gospel (Isaiah 53:1. Lord, who hath believed our report? Implying that not all have believed that gospel. Stronger still, it implies that only a minority has believed the gospel. Who then? Where are those people then?
The next question in Isaiah 53:1 is: “to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed?” This therefore means that in the Old Testament it was already announced that only a minority of the people would come to faith. Everyone has heard the gospel—all nations, including Israel and the Jews—but in general people do not come to faith. Only a minority, a remnant. The conclusion is…

Romans 10:17
So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
The only way to come to faith is by obeying the preaching. If the preaching does not help, then there is nothing more to be done. If therefore one prays for the salvation of Israel, that can only be a prayer that God would send preachers. It is a prayer that the Head of service, Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, the Head of the church moreover, would send some of His priests, of His staff, of the members of His body, to preach the gospel. Nothing more can be done. The choice lies with man himself. He should be placed before the choice by the preaching of the gospel. Good biblical preaching is always preaching that places man before the choice. That applies not only to preaching to unbelievers, but equally to those who have officially long since come to faith. If it is not to come to faith, then it is to live by faith. To put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22–24.Faith comes by hearing, and when one has come to faith, James says: “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21. That is the same passage in which he says that every man should be swift to hear, slow to speak. He says that to believers. We as believers should hear the word of God, for faith and also living by faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. If therefore anything is to be preached, then it is the word of God and not the word of men. Biblical preaching is preaching of biblical truth and not of things we have thought up ourselves. By that people do not come to faith and do not learn to live by faith either. Then one comes at most to faith in man himself. If one preaches one’s own word, then one is busy making disciples for oneself. Then one makes oneself the good shepherd and places oneself in

the position of Christ Himself and makes oneself an antichrist. Those are hard words, but there are various Scripture passages that say it at least as hard.

Romans 10:18
But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world
.Have they not heard? Yes indeed, but not all have obeyed the gospel. Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. That is a quotation from Psalm 19:4.
Psalm 19:1
The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
Psalm 19:2
Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
Psalm 19:3
There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.
Psalm 19:4
Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
Their voice is not heard. There is preaching, but there is no listening. The stars and their names and the constellations and their names do indeed preserve biblical truth. The fact that the word of God has been preached throughout the whole world is expressed in various traditions. One of the most fixed traditions is that of the constellations and the names of the stars. The whole star map and the names on it is essentially a kind of picture book to the Bible. That this still exists proves that in the past, ever since Adam, the word of God was preached. That is why you also find the Lord Jesus under various names in the starry heavens. The constellation Boötes is nothing other than Boaz = the strong Man. That speaks of the Lord and His great power, who will come at His second coming. Perseus = Perez = one of the sons of Judah and has to do with the royal family. Perez = breaker through.
Christ is called the Breaker in Micah 2.
There is also the so-called serpent-tamer, the serpent-bearer. That is Christ. The Seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent.
However that may be, God has spoken from the beginning. From the very beginning and among all peoples. After the resurrection the gospel has also been preached among all nations, but people have not always obeyed that preaching. That is what Paul quotes here.

Romans 10:19
But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.
Did Israel not understand? One could have understood it. If one did not understand it, then one did not listen to it and did not take the word seriously. That is still the case today. People do not take the Bible seriously. There are even countless people who earn their living from studying the Bible, but do not take the Bible itself seriously. They do not believe that the Bible is the word of God. They do not believe that the Creator speaks to man in it. People do study the word, but do not take it seriously and therefore understand nothing of it.

Did Israel not understand? First Moses says something, and in the following verses Isaiah also says something. In Deuteronomy 32 Moses says: “I will move you to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke you to anger with a foolish nation” (Deuteronomy 32:21. “I” is obviously the LORD, who says this to the people through Moses.
... and by a foolish nation I will anger you.
A foolish nation is a nation that does not have the law. A Gentile nation therefore. In Romans 2 it already said that the Jews rest in the law, boast in God, know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law. They trust that they themselves are a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, and so on. In other words, they think they are wise, and this therefore means that Gentiles are by definition foolish. From their point of view. And so the Lord says: I will move you to jealousy by a foolish nation, by a nation not instructed in the law.
Deuteronomy 32:18
Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.
Deuteronomy 32:19
And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.
Deuteronomy 32:20
And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.
The Lord says that they do not want to remember Him, that they forget Him, and therefore He will hide His face from them. This is the description of the situation since the resurrection of Christ, since when He hides Himself and has let go of the world. Concerning the same time in which the Lord hides Himself, it is also said...
Deuteronomy 32:21
They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.
The Lord was provoked to jealousy and to anger because they served other gods. The New Testament says of that that they are not gods at all, but demons.
God will move them to jealousy by those who are not a people (Lo-Ammi) and provoke them to anger by a foolish nation. That is what is happening in our days. The foolish nation is primarily the ten tribes of Israel, but in practice the church. The Jewish people are jealous of the church, for we know the Messiah. We believe that the Messiah has come and live in practice under the New Covenant, which was originally promised to Israel, but we have received part in it. We serve the God of Israel, and Israel itself does not even know how to pronounce His name and therefore stubbornly refuses to call upon that name. That is why gospel preaching often provokes rather negative reactions among the Jews. That is why people in Nijkerk, who consider themselves friends of Israel, say that one should not preach the gospel to the Jews, because then they become angry. It provokes irritation.
But the Bible says that this is precisely the intention. The Lord would provoke them to anger by Lo-Ammi. Israel could therefore have known that this is how it would go. In preaching the gospel one should expressly quote these Scripture passages to argue

that this is how the Lord would act. God would gather a people for Himself from the Gentiles, whereby the Jewish people would be provoked to jealousy.
In Isaiah 11 it speaks of the future conversion of Israel in the days of the coming of Christ, when Israel will be gathered from all nations.
Isaiah 11:12
And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.
Isaiah 11:13
The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
No longer, in those days. Behind the term Ephraim the church is hidden. Ephraim is the designation of the ten tribes, but through the ten tribes the designation of the church. Here two sides are highlighted, implying that Ephraim would indeed envy Judah and Judah vex Ephraim. The Jews are jealous of the Christians, but unfortunately the reverse also happens, namely that Christians who do not know their own position well are jealous of the Jews. They see the Jews as the people of God and think that we should help the Jews and take example from them. In reality the Jews are not the people of God, but the church. That tension exists, and Isaiah says that that tension will disappear in the future. Primarily it is the jealousy of Judah, because Ephraim has already received what Judah does not yet have.
Think of the parable of the prodigal son, who is a picture of the ten tribes of Israel, but the other son is just as important in the story. That son who was never away and was jealous of the son who was away but returned. That returned son is the church. The son who was never away is a picture of the Jewish people.
Moses says first, but then Isaiah also says something...

Romans 10:20
But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.
Isaiah is very bold = he is bold, audacious. He makes a bold statement. This is a quotation from Isaiah 65:1.
Isaiah 65:1
I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.The nation that was not called by My name = Lo-Ammi.
Behold Me, behold Me. The Lord has made Himself known to the nation that was not called by His name. He has made Himself known to a Gentile nation as “I am.” That is a shortening of the name Jehovah. He has made Himself known to those who did not seek Him.
With that we are actually completely back in Romans 9:30, with the Gentiles who did not seek righteousness but have attained to righteousness by faith. The Jews did seek, but did not find, because they did not seek by faith but by works of the law.
Also from Romans 9:30 one could read straight on into Isaiah 65:1.
In other words, salvation came somewhere else. It was preached to Israel, but they have not all obeyed the gospel. Therefore it came to a Gentile nation, to the Gentiles, but more specifically to one Gentile nation. For it was by one foolish nation. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 21 to the Jews: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given

to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Singular. Salvation was sent to the Gentiles, but the question is to which Gentiles. To one nation, even though it must be said that that nation is in fact a multitude of nations, the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel.

Romans 10:21
But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.
Israel is what is still called Israel, namely the Jewish people. All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. A people therefore that was quick to speak and slow to hear. People speak too much to God. They interrupt Him. They always know better. That is the situation in Judaism and even in so-called Christianity. In most churches, from the Roman Catholic church to evangelical circles, people always know better than the Bible. There is always commentary given. It says so, but we do it differently anyway. People have no reverence for the Bible, but do have for what a church teaches or what the church fathers said and taught. In evangelical circles people then follow one and then another. They think the Bible does not say it right, that God does not do His work well. Christ does not do His work well and we know better how to approach things in these times. People do not study the Bible, but the confessions or the Talmud. It is always tradition, tradition, and that changes. People always contradict Him, and if there is one sin, then it is the sin of contradicting, namely the sin of unbelief.
Christ endured such contradiction of sinners against himself (Hebrews 12:3. What is that, the contradiction of sinners? In the first place they are sinners, for they speak against. Sin is missing, and in contradicting one misses what is spoken. One sets something else alongside it. One rejects the word of God and replaces it with one's own speaking. One should let the Bible speak and nothing else.
The tragedy of that religious people, the Jews, is that by definition they contradict. That is characteristic of religion. God says that man is justified by faith, but religion says that man must do his best to be justified.
Isaiah 65:2
I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;
We should not walk after our own thoughts. We should not do what is right in our own eyes. We should walk the race that God has set before us. We should walk in the good works that God has prepared. From the heart there always come objections that go against the Bible. Nothing needs to be explained from the Bible; you should simply read what it says. And that it needs explanation within the Bible itself is true. Thus Paul's exposition receives explanation from Moses, from Isaiah, from Psalm 51, from Nahum 1, from Joel 2, and so on. The Bible explains itself. One should compare Scripture with Scripture and show that God has said it so.
If someone were to come to faith, then it would simply be by the preaching of the gospel. Over the centuries enough has been preached, but there has always been only a part that came to faith. As far as Israel is concerned, it was preached to Judah, but it came to Ephraim. It was preached to Jacob, but it fell in Israel. That is a nice play on words. The gospel was preached to the people as such, only where it fell it is by definition called Israel. Where it fell with us, there we have been added and have received part in the citizenship of Israel. That is taught to us in the New Testament.

In the following part it is set out that believers are after all a minority in Israel. That has always been so and that is still so in our days. So not much has changed in the course of history. The word is preached in the world, but only a minority comes to faith.

Romans 11 – The Future of Israel and the Mystery of God's Plan
It concludes Paul's argument (from Romans 9–11) about God's faithfulness to Israel despite their unbelief. Paul shows that God has not permanently cast away His people, explains the current partial hardening of Israel, the role of Gentile believers (the church), and the future restoration of "all Israel." The chapter ends with a doxology praising God's unsearchable wisdom.
Key Sections and Main Points

1. God Has Not Cast Away His People (vv. 1–6)
   Paul asks: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid" (Romans 11:1). Proof: Paul himself is an Israelite (seed of Abraham, tribe of Benjamin).
   God has not rejected Israel whom He foreknew (Romans 11:2).
   Example: In Elijah's day, when he thought he was the only one left (Romans 11:3), God replied: "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (Romans 11:4).
   So now: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5).
   This remnant is saved by grace, not works (Romans 11:6) — grace and works are mutually exclusive.
2. The Remnant, the Hardened, and the Purpose (vv. 7–10)
   Israel as a whole did not obtain what it sought (righteousness), but "the election" (believers/remnant) obtained it; "the rest were blinded" (Romans 11:7).
   God gave them "the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear" (Romans 11:8) — a judicial hardening after persistent unbelief.
   David's words (Psalm 69:22–23) are applied: their table (religious system/culture) becomes a snare, trap, stumblingblock, and recompense; their eyes darkened, backs bowed continually (Romans 11:9–10). This describes ongoing judgment on unbelieving Israel.
3. Salvation to the Gentiles — Provoking Israel to Jealousy (vv. 11–15)
   Did they stumble so as to fall permanently? "God forbid" (Romans 11:11).
   Through their fall, "salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Romans 11:11).
   Their fall = riches of the world; their diminishing = riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness (future restoration) will bring even greater blessing (Romans 11:12).
   Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, magnifies his ministry, hoping to provoke his kinsmen to jealousy and save some (Romans 11:13–14).
   Their "casting away" = reconciling of the world; their "receiving" = "life from the dead" (national resurrection/rebirth) (Romans 11:15).
4. The Olive Tree Illustration (vv. 16–24)
   If the firstfruit (remnant/believers) is holy, the lump (whole) is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches (Romans 11:16).
   Some natural branches (unbelieving Jews) broken off because of unbelief; wild

olive branches (Gentiles) grafted in contrary to nature, sharing the root and fatness (Romans 11:17).
Do not boast against the broken branches — you do not support the root; the root supports you (Romans 11:18).
They were broken off for unbelief; you stand by faith — be not highminded, but fear (Romans 11:20).
If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not you (Romans 11:21).
Behold God's goodness (to you) and severity (to them that fell); continue in His goodness, or you also will be cut off (Romans 11:22).
The natural branches can be grafted back in if they cease unbelief — God is able (Romans 11:23).
If wild branches were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more easily will natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree (Romans 11:24).

5. The Mystery Revealed (vv. 25–32)
   Paul reveals a mystery so believers will not be wise in their own conceits:
   "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25).
   "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26) — the Deliverer will come out of Sion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Isaiah 59:20).
   This is God's covenant: "when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:27).
   As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes (Romans 11:28).
   "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29) — irrevocable.
   Just as you (Gentiles) once disobeyed but now obtained mercy through their unbelief, so now they have disobeyed that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy (Romans 11:30–31).
   God has concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all (Romans 11:32).
6. Doxology — God's Unsearchable Wisdom (vv. 33–36)
   "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).
   No one has known His mind, been His counsellor, or first given to Him (Romans 11:34–35).
   "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:36).

Overall Message

- God remains faithful to Israel — a remnant now exists by grace; the nation as a whole is partially hardened, but not permanently rejected.
- Gentile believers (the church) have been grafted into Israel's privileges to provoke Israel to jealousy and fulfill God's plan.
- The church's present role is temporary; Israel's future "fulness" (national conversion and restoration) will bring even greater blessing ("life from the dead").

- The chapter balances God's severity (hardening unbelief) and goodness (mercy through faith), culminating in praise for His sovereign, wise plan that no human could invent or advise.

Romans 11 resolves the tension: Israel's unbelief opened salvation to the Gentiles, but God's irrevocable calling ensures Israel's future restoration — all to His glory.

Romans 11:1
I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Romans 11:2
God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

Romans 11:3
Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Romans 11:4
But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Romans 11:5
Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Romans 11:6
And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.
Grace is unmerited favour. Without works, therefore. The verse says the same thing twice, only stated from two different sides.
According to this verse work is work because it yields something. If it yields nothing, it is not called work but a hobby. Work is not merely occupation or activity, but work is work so that it may yield something. That is why work and grace do not tolerate each other. They are two opposite concepts.

Romans 11:7
What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.
What then? Once again a summary is given. What are we actually claiming, followed by a brief summary of what has gone before. Israel (the Jewish people) sought something but has not obtained it. It has not found it. There is a good reason for that, for they sought in the wrong place. They sought under the law, supposing that the law provided sufficient light to find one thing and another, but that proved not to be the case. This already stood in Romans 9:31. Israel sought the law of righteousness but did not attain to righteousness. Why not? Because they did not seek it by faith and therefore not by grace, but by the works of the law. Here it stands again, but now the emphasis is not on

the fact that they did not obtain it, but that the election obtained it. The rest were hardened.
“Election” here is synonymous with believers. The elect are the believers, and the believers are the elect. It is not as Calvinism would have it, that one must be elect to come to faith. That is the opposite of what the Bible teaches on the matter. The Bible teaches that a man comes to faith and on that ground is elect. If you do not come to faith, then you are not elect. If you have not come to faith and yet would have liked to be elect, then you must still come to faith. God chooses faith, and therefore if you believe you are elect on that ground.
Israel sought righteousness but did not obtain it, but the believers obtained it. The rest were hardened. The unbelievers were hardened. That is the Jewish people, but also the Gentiles who did not seek righteousness. The unbelievers, with emphasis on the Jewish people, were hardened, unresponsive. Their mind, their heart, was hardened.

Romans 11:8
(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.God has given them the spirit of slumber. This is a controversial verse. This verse too is used to support the Calvinistic doctrine of election. If someone is elect, God gives him faith, and if he is not elect, God hardens his heart. To this day many think that God has hardened the Jewish people and that therefore they cannot come to faith, for God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. But the history of Christianity is also quite full of Jews who came to faith. That story therefore does not hold in any case. Moreover the first Christians were Jews. The twelve apostles were Jews, the Lord Himself was a Jew. Something does not add up there. God does indeed give a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, but He gives that to those who first reject the message. If a man is placed before a choice and says no to it, and after a time is placed before the same choice again and says no again, then it is quite certain that when he is placed before that choice for the third time he begins to cough up ugly words. Repetition promotes hardening. That is one thing.

Romans 11:9
And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

Romans 11:10
Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.This is drawn from Psalm 69, which is headed: Prayer for deliverance from martyrdom. The Martyr is the Lord Jesus.
Psalm 69:22
They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
Gall = bitterness;
Vinegar = what has soured.
David says with these words that this Psalm applies to the Lord Jesus. He quoted several more Psalms at the cross, whereby it is said that in fact all the Psalms concern Him.

With verse 22 we have therefore arrived at the crucifixion.
The gall and the vinegar naturally also have a figurative meaning. That is a description of the unbelief and enmity of the Jewish people.
They = the Jewish people.
They have a table. From now on Romans 11:9 is quoted…Psalm 69:22–23
They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.
Snare, full recompense, trap.
In Romans 11 it is called: snare, trap, stumblingblock, recompense.
Psalm 69:23
Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.
The shaking loins must then correspond to “bow down their back alway.” It apparently concerns man being bowed together. In the New Testament you meet someone who was bowed together and the Lord straightened her. But this one remains bowed together. The one was bowed together and is straightened, and the other was bowed together and is not straightened.
Loins = those are necessary to be able to stand. By the loins man holds himself upright. Also with regard to posterity.
The Jewish people are therefore threatened with extinction. The people would not be able to stand. It does not quite fall, but it is bowed together. It goes rather laboriously. That is also one of the characteristics of the history of the Jewish people in the past 2000 years. That is that recompense.
Table = we as believers also have a table. Well, it is not ours, but we have a table from which we eat and at which we sit. Whereby the table is the expression of what binds us, namely our fellowship with one another, but in the first place our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
A table holds something up, keeps something in view, sets something before us. We also encounter tables in the lawgiving, for God set the law before Israel and wrote it on two tables of stone. On a table you can set something. You can therefore also write on it. That is what the Lord did, so that those tables would be kept in the midst of the people. Those tables set the law before them.
You can also serve a meal on a table.
You also have the multiplication tables. A table is also a table. It is the same word. Those were therefore tables, lists, that you can consult.
If it is something beautiful, it is called a tableau. A newspaper can be called a tabloid. Further, a tablet is also a little table. In former times people wrote on clay tablets.
We have a table and if you take it somewhat literally, then there is bread and wine on it, because they express the essence of who we are. We are invited by the Lord, for it is His table. We sit at that table and He sets before us bread and wine. God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. That represents that we are part of the one body of Christ and that we have received the life of the New Covenant. That is determinative for our walk of life.
Table = culture.
Culture stands for way of life, but actually for a common way of life. We, who maintain a common way of life, have a Christian culture.

That is therefore a table. That is why in former times table manners and table arrangements were always considered important, for then we feel one with one another. It all had to happen somewhat in the same way. It is the picture of who we are and of the fellowship of which we are part. The New Covenant is also always presented as a meal. Think, for example, of the history of Esther. The story takes place around three meals, because the meal is the picture of a culture. It is something communal, and fellowship is actually only under the New Covenant. That is also why you quite often find a meal in the Gospels = gamos. That word is also often translated as wedding feast. The meal is therefore the picture of our way of life under the New Covenant. The Lord had prepared a meal and when the food was ready the Lord said to His servants that they could call the invited guests, but then all the invited guests suddenly had excuses not to take part in the meal. Then they were sent out to invite everyone they could find and who wanted to come. Then there came a motley crowd who did want to sit at the Lord's table. That is the church. The Jewish people did not want to, but the food was there anyway and so the Lord invited the others.
The meal is therefore a picture of the New Covenant. The table of the Lord's Supper is the picture of our fellowship as children of God under the New Covenant.
That brings us to the table of the Jews. It will be clear that they eat from a different table and that Jewish culture knows other norms than our culture. In Hebrews 13 the word "table" is replaced by something even higher, namely an altar. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle (Hebrews 13:10. Our culture is that of the New Covenant, and those who hold to the Old Covenant, expressed in the word "tabernacle," have no right to eat of it.
Concerning their table something is said in Isaiah 28.
Isaiah 28:8
For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.
In Isaiah 28:5 there is mention of a glorified Christ in our present time. We also find there the concept of remnant, which we encountered at the beginning of Romans 11.
Isaiah 28:5
In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,
That speaks of an exalted Christ. He will be that for the residue of His people. That is us, for we are that remnant and we are His people. That therefore cannot be missed
Isaiah 28:6
And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.
Isaiah 28:7
But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.
They have lost sight of reality. They live in a fantasy world. Normally someone devours the wine, but here they are devoured by the wine. Those who have drunk too much have lost the right track.
Isaiah 28:8
For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

Those are the tables of the unbelieving people. The table is full of senseless rubbish and that is still politely expressed. The Lord complains.
Isaiah 28:9
Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.
What stands on that table is actually what is written on it. Culture is determined by certain traditions, which may not really be written down, but they have the effect of rules to which one adheres. This sort of instruction is presented in the Bible as food. The bread on our table is the bread that came down from heaven, and man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
In short, the Lord wants to set His word, in which He reveals His knowledge, as spiritual food on the table, but the table is full of vomit and filthiness. There is no place for that word of God. In plain language this simply means that in Jewish culture there is no room for the Messiah. Judaism is characterised by expecting the Messiah; in contrast to Christianity, for there one believes that the Messiah has already come. So if the expected Messiah of Judaism comes, then all Jews become Christians again. If the Messiah comes there is no place for Him in Judaism. If one accepts Him, then Judaism immediately comes to an end. In the Jewish system there is no place for the Messiah, only for the expectation of the Messiah.
Under the law there is no room for grace. As long as the Old Covenant still stands, there is no room for the New Covenant.
The first sign in the Gospel according to John is the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. The second sign was that He overturned the tables in the temple. Those tables too express Jewish culture. Religion is trade. One offers something to God and hopes to get something back for it. The Lord overturns the tables of those merchants. The Lord Jesus did that in the passion week. That same day He also announced the destruction of Jerusalem. Those tables are the picture of Judaism and they are full of filthiness.
Paul uses the same word in Philippians 3. He counted all things that had to do with Judaism and in which he was so good as loss and dung. Where does he suddenly get the word dung from? From Isaiah 28, of course.
One cannot do something for God to get something back from Him.
In Colossians 2:8 Paul says: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” That is what it is about. Make sure that table is clean. Preferably everything off it, let the Lord fill it. The Lord’s table is also covered by Him and He places something on it. That is the essence of it. We do not invite the Lord to our table, but He invites us to His table.
In Isaiah 28:10 it says that that table full of vomit and filthiness is a picture of the law.
Isaiah 28:10
For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:
The table is full of religious institutions, but it is loss and dung. It must go, so that one may win Christ. That it concerns our time is confirmed in verse 11…
Isaiah 28:11
For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

This verse is quoted in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14, where it is said that the Lord in our days, while salvation has been taken from the Jewish people, now preaches the gospel to the Jewish people in Gentile languages.
In Psalm 69 there is in the following verses a statement applied to Judas.
Psalm 69:25
Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.This is quoted in Acts 1:20 in connection with Judas. Let his habitation be desolate. Here it says “let their palace be desolate.” Where this verse in Acts is applied to Judas, it will be clear that on a higher level this is applied to Judah, to the whole Jewish people, of which Judas was the picture.
Now from verse 11 we get another such summary.

Romans 11:11
I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.
Was it the intention that they should fall? After the statements in Psalms and Isaiah one might think that God wanted the Jewish people to stumble, since it stands there (and therefore announced long beforehand) that they would stumble. That is a misunderstanding that also exists in connection with other prophecies. Then it says that this or that would happen and therefore God wills it so. But then one confuses the will of God with the foreknowledge of God.
But no, it was not God’s intention that they should stumble, but it has happened. But guess what? Did it then go wrong? No, for through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy. That is a theme that has come up many times. That is what it is all about. What the Jewish people rejected has gone to the Gentiles. What the Jewish people could not find, because they sought wrongly, has come to the Gentiles. Even to Gentiles who by nature do the things of the law. Salvation was taken from the Jews and given to another nation that does bring forth its fruits (Matthew 21:43. The announcement at the end of biblical history is: “Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear” (Acts 28:28. It is not the announcement of what would happen at that moment, but it concludes that it has now happened.
Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. Paul again refers back to Romans 10:19, where it says that they would be provoked to jealousy by Lo-Ammi. Paul points back to that here in Romans 11:11. That salvation has come to the Gentiles and the Gentiles would provoke the Jews to jealousy and thereby to anger.

Romans 11:12
Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?
Their fulness proves to be the opposite of their fall and their diminishing. Their fall and diminishing is their unbelief.
If their unbelief is already to the riches of the world, how much more will their fulness not be to the riches of the world? This anticipates the future conversion of the Jewish people, for that will be to the riches of the world. The conversion of the Jewish people will ultimately result in the revelation of the kingdom of Christ under the New Covenant,

over the earth and over all nations. In our days only the church arises from the nations. In the future, after the conversion of the Jewish people, all nations will be brought into the kingdom and it will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Their fulness therefore. The fulness of the Gentiles from verse 25 speaks of the church, for we are the fulness of the Gentiles. We are after all the believers from the Gentiles. Their fulness from verse 12 concerns the believing Jews in the future. Those two are set over against each other, but there are quite a few verses in between, which makes it rather difficult.

Romans 11:13
For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:
This epistle was therefore written to believers in Rome, who primarily consisted of believers from the Gentiles. The letter was therefore not delivered to the house of Aquila and Priscilla, for that was a church that mainly consisted of Jews. It is much more likely that the letter was delivered to the Palatium Britannicum, the British palace therefore, for that was the domicile of the church from the Gentiles in Rome.
I speak to you Gentiles. To the British palace, no less!

Romans 11:14
If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.
Inasmuch as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry by any means provoking my own flesh to jealousy and saving some of them. That is not quite how it stands word for word, but it is what the text says. Paul wanted to provoke his own flesh to jealousy and save some of them. He would undoubtedly have wished to save them all, but he could not, and besides he had just said that there is only a remnant. Moreover he would provoke his kinsmen according to the flesh to jealousy. It would be the crowning achievement of his work to win some of the Jews for Christ. That is what his desire goes out to. He says this to the Gentiles.
There are two difficulties here. One is that he says whether he might by any means provoke his flesh to jealousy. If we place this verse alongside Romans 10:19, would it not be the Gentiles who provoke the Jews to jealousy? How then can Paul say that he would do it? Let us leave that question aside for the moment.
Inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles. That means that to a certain extent he is an apostle of the Gentiles. Unfortunately the general idea is that Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles and that he therefore preached the gospel to Gentiles. The classical view is that he was specially sent to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, since the others naturally did that too. But that is simply not biblical. We know, because it stands in the Bible, which of the apostles was officially to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Baronius said that Peter opened the door to the Gentiles and that Paul and the other apostles then went through that door. He is quite right, for in Acts 15, where the apostles once met officially in Jerusalem, including Paul, in the presence of the church there in Jerusalem, Paul first receives the floor to report on his first missionary journey. On that journey he brought the gospel to Jews in other parts of the world. They generally did not come to faith, but the Gentiles who got wind of it did come to faith. Paul could not help that either. The question then was whether the Gentiles who had come to faith now also had to live under Jewish principles. Peter then made a statement about that and said that

Paul had spoken, but that he (Peter) had the last word in this matter, because this was his department. He said...
Acts 15:7
And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.
Peter therefore. At first you think back to the house of Cornelius the Gentile, where he was told by God to go. He did not really feel like it, but he went anyway. However that may be, Cornelius and his household came to faith. Moreover they demonstratively received the Holy Ghost, so that no one could deny it was so. And whether Peter liked it or not, he had to baptise them.
A good while ago. God had already arranged long beforehand that Peter would bring the gospel to the Gentiles.
If that preaching to the Gentiles is what is specific to Peter, what then is specific to the apostle Paul? In contrast to all the other apostles Paul was a Roman. He had Roman citizenship. And therefore he was a Gentile. Paul as a Gentile preaches wherever he goes the message of the gospel to the Jews. Paul is the Gentile who officially and in practice brought the gospel to the Jews.
Who was it again who would provoke the Jews to jealousy? A Gentile nation. The question therefore is: name a Gentile who did that? Paul therefore. That is what he says too. He would magnify his ministry by provoking some of his flesh to jealousy and saving some of them.
Apostle of the Gentiles = a genitive construction. There are seven to nine possible applications of such a genitive. We no longer have that second case form and therefore we have agreed to translate “of the” always as “of the.” Then it becomes apostle of the Gentiles. The kingdom of heaven = the kingdom of the heaven. The angel of the Lord = the angel of the Lord. But it is not the angel of the Lord, but the angel namely the Lord. The kingdom is not the kingdom, namely heaven, but the kingdom from heaven, for then one calls it a genitive of origin. Apostle of the Gentiles is also not apostle of the Gentiles, but an apostle from the Gentiles. He is a Gentile who preaches the gospel. The Messiah of the Jews = the Jewish Messiah.
Paul was therefore a Gentile apostle. The last part of Paul’s life he is with great emphasis a Roman. Actually from his arrest in Jerusalem. There he behaved as a Jew, but that turned out completely wrong. After that he becomes a Roman and becomes a Roman prisoner and appeals to Caesar, is taken to Rome, writes letters there to various churches. He even died as a Roman a martyr’s death, though that is no longer in the Bible. He called himself a Roman man.
We read of the church that it is a royal and priestly people, a peculiar people, in place of the Jewish priestly people. What would the Jewish people do as priests? Preach the word of God to the Gentiles. But the Jewish people are unbelieving and therefore the word of God is entrusted to the Gentiles. What should those Gentiles do with it? In the first place preach that word to the Jews. That is the responsibility of the church as a royal and priestly people. If all is well we do that therefore.
And where Paul is an example for the whole church, we note that he is a Gentile who as an example of the church preaches the gospel to the Jews to save some of them.
On the other hand Paul was also a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, but that aspect of his person he counted all as loss and dung. He wanted nothing more to do with that, that

he might win Christ. That was precisely that dung on the table. That table would be cleared and therefore Paul kept a great distance from Judaism.
In Romans 15:16 he calls himself a minister of the Gentiles. This too means: belonging to the Gentiles. Romans 16:26 = among all the Gentiles, also means belonging to the Gentiles. Important in this connection is probably 1 Timothy 2:7...
1 Timothy 2:7
Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.
Teacher of the Gentiles = Gentile teacher. Of course he was also a teacher of the Gentiles, but of the Jews just as well. Why does he speak the truth and lie not? We surely believe that he was a teacher of the Gentiles. But he said that he was a Gentile teacher, that was rather unheard of, for the other apostles were all Jews.
See also 1 Timothy 1:11; Acts 13:47.
The Gentile believer has as the high point in his ministry the conversion of a Jew. Later in Romans 11 it stands that it is the intention that these disobedient should obtain mercy through the church. Our salvation has come to us from the Jewish people. Therefore we have more or less an obligation to the Jewish people to hold that salvation before them. They did not hold it before us, because they were unbelieving, but nevertheless salvation is of the Jews and came to us. In our days the roles are reversed. We, believers from the Gentiles, have the responsibility to preach the word of God, from which we have been born again, to that Jewish people, to provoke them to jealousy and to save some of them.

Romans 11:15
For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?
Paul speaks of a future conversion of Israel, whereby he speaks of the casting away in our days, whereby it is somewhat doubtful what was then cast away. You can read into it that Israel itself was cast away, but you can also read it as their casting away of the Messiah. Then they are the ones who cast away and the Messiah is the One who was cast away. However that may be, it does not make much difference, for we know anyway what it is about. These two things belong together.
The casting away has at any rate to do with their unbelief. That is the reconciling of the world, just as their fall in verse 12 was called the riches of the world and their diminishing the riches of the Gentiles. Their fall was not the intention, but it has resulted in salvation coming to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy. They are again received by the Lord Jesus Christ, because they will yet receive Him. This does not mean that the conversion of Israel results in the last day, or that people are simply born again, for that always happens and therefore it concerns life from the dead for Israel itself.
This seems to have to do with the prophecy about the valley of dry bones from Ezekiel 37, in which it ultimately turns out that those bones become living. These bones are the whole house of Israel. That is the expression Peter uses on the day of Pentecost, when he says: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36.

The whole house of Israel is all the tribes of Israel. They become living again. The Jews have retained the idea from that that when the Messiah comes all graves will open and therefore many have themselves buried for a considerable sum on the Mount of Olives, for when the Messiah comes and they are raised, then they stand immediately right at the front. That idea rests on the misunderstanding that the (second) coming of the Messiah results in physical resurrection from the dead. But Ezekiel 37 does not speak of that. It speaks of the rebirth of Israel as a nation. “I will bring you up out of your graves, O my people.” Israel is reckoned buried among the nations and “I will bring you up out of your graves” corresponds to “I will gather you again from all the nations whither I have driven you.” And therefore the Israelite nation will be born again.
Life from the dead = resurrection from the dead, whereby not all rise from the dead yet. But, as said, it is not about physical resurrection, but about the national rebirth of the people Israel. Their receiving is their national rebirth. With that this rhetorical question is suddenly answered, for in the future Israel will yet be gathered and brought by the Messiah into the land. Israel will come to conversion. In our days some of them. Those are in practice added to the church, so that Israel in our days does not gradually come to faith, but those believers contribute to the coming into being of the church, which is gathered from all nations, first the Jew and the Greek and therefore from Jew and Gentile.

Romans 11:16
For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.
The firstfruits are that remnant, the saved, from the first verses of this chapter. Believers in our days are surplus, remaining, escaped, left behind. They are individuals, a minority, but indeed firstfruits. They are those who were predestinated unto the adoption of sons from Romans 8. That was intended for Israel and it is intended for the church. We are firstfruits of that.
We are holy, set apart for the service of God. The firstfruits are clearly the first fruits of the harvest, from which a lump is prepared, according to the Levitical instructions. From that lump two loaves are baked, which on the feast of firstfruits loaves (the feast of Pentecost) would be waved in the hands of the priest before the face of the Lord. That event therefore coincided with the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, where in practice there is the coming into being of the church. The two firstfruits loaves are a picture of the church. Why two firstfruits loaves if it is only one church? Because a firstborn counts double. The firstborn receives a double portion. Therefore firstborn = bechur = 2. 20. 200.If the firstfruits are holy, then what comes from them is also holy. Therefore the lump is also holy. Then Paul switches to another picture, that of a tree. If the root is holy, then the branches are too. It now concerns a tree with a small origin, from which something develops. In the Old Testament the kingdom of Babel was considered a tree (Daniel 4). In Matthew 13 the kingdom of heaven is like a tree. In Joshua 9 the trees once went to choose a king for themselves. Then they asked if there were candidates for kingship. Trees are therefore pictures of kingdoms, of nations. A nation begins with a root, then a trunk. Then you have a family tree, a nation. But a nation is a kingdom. A tree is a family, but when a tree becomes large, then the head of the family is suddenly called a king. As far as Israel is concerned it began with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then it branches out. The tree gets twelve branches, perhaps even thirteen.

Under the New Covenant this kingdom begins with the Lord Jesus Christ. He received that resurrection life, but then He gives that life to many more and so a tree arises. That is the kingdom of Christ. Of that we are indeed firstfruits.

What's a "Wild" Olive Tree?

- A wild one looks good but produces no fruit—like empty grain heads or a barren fig tree (Luke 13:6; John 15:4, where Jesus says, "Abide in me… or you're thrown away").
- If Israel unbelieves, it turns "wild," unable to feed from its holy root (Christ).
- Key idea: Unfruitful branches get pruned; fruitful ones from wild trees get grafted in to keep the main tree thriving.

The Two Olive Trees in Romans 11

Paul uses olive trees to explain God's plan for Jews and non-Jews:

- Fruitful Olive Tree: Believing Israel (mainly the two tribes: Judah and Benjamin, the "Jewish nation").
- Wild Olive Tree: Unbelieving parts of Israel (the 10 lost tribes from Assyrian captivity) or Gentiles (non-Jews).
- What Happens? Unbelieving Jewish branches are "broken off" for lack of faith. Fruitful wild branches (believing Gentiles/10 tribes) are grafted in, so the tree (God's people) bears more fruit.
- Big Picture: Salvation shifts from Jews (who rejected Christ) to Gentiles, but God isn't done with Israel—a remnant will be grafted back by faith.

The Two Olive Trees in Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11

These chapters link up: Zechariah's vision previews Revelation's end-times drama.

- Zechariah 4 Setup:
    - Vision: A gold lampstand (like the tabernacle's menorah = light of God's Word/Spirit/Christ) with 7 lamps (complete light) and pipes.
    - Two olive trees on each side pour fresh oil nonstop into the lamps—no human effort needed.
    - Question: "What are these?" Answer: "The two anointed ones [sons of fresh oil] who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4:14).
    - Oil = Holy Spirit's power, fueling light (God's truth) to Israel during the Great Tribulation.
- Revelation 11 Connection:
    - Calls the two witnesses "the two olive trees and two lampstands" before God (Rev. 11:4).
    - After the rapture (Church taken up), these witnesses (likely Moses and Elijah) prophesy for 3½ years (first half of Daniel's 70th week/tribulation).
    - Temple measured: Symbolizes the completed Church (Rev. 11:1–2; Heb. 12:23). Inner court = reborn Israel; outer = Gentiles trampling Jerusalem in the last 3½ years.
    - Witnesses in sackcloth (mourning), preach repentance—like Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:38–40). They urge Jews to flee to Petra (safety rock = Christ).
    - Powers: Like Moses (water to blood) and Elijah (no rain for 3½ years; Luke 4:25; James 5:17). Fire from mouths eats enemies; plagues on earth (Rev. 11:5–6).
    - Death: Beast kills them mid-tribulation; bodies displayed 3½ days. Resurrection triggers earthquake, killing 7,000—real tribulation ramps up (Rev. 11:7–13).
    - Why Moses/Elijah? They chat with transfigured Jesus (Matt. 17:1–13) and represent Law/Prophets. Anointed like "fresh oil" = Spirit-filled.

- Lampstands Link: In Revelation 1:12–20, 7 golden lampstands = 7 churches (united in Christ, like branches). Each has a mission, but together = one Church (Matt. 16:18).

Olive Trees as King and Priest

- In Zechariah 4–6: The two trees = High Priest (Joshua) and King (Zerubbabel), who led Jews back from Babylon (Ezra 2–3).
- They preview Christ as both (like Melchizedek: King-Priest; Heb. 7:1–2).
- For the witnesses:
  - Moses = Kingly role (leads, gives Law).
  - Elijah = Priestly role (prophet, fire from heaven; John the Baptist came in Elijah's spirit—Luke 1:17).
- In Romans 11 Tie-In: Two tribes (Judah/Benjamin = kingly line from Judah). 10 tribes = priestly role (Levites ended with Christ's resurrection—now all believers are priests).
- Overall: Kings from Judah, priests from Levi—but Jesus combines them. The trees show God's dual anointing (rule + intercession) for His people.

Symbol	Meaning	Bible Tie-In
Olive Tree (Main)	Israel/God's people; root = Christ	Romans 11: Grafting for fruitfulness
Wild Olive	Unbelievers (Gentiles/10 tribes)	Grafted in by faith; no fruit alone
Oil	Holy Spirit/Anointing/Christ's life	Fuels lamps (light/truth) endlessly
Two Trees	Anointed servants (Moses/Elijah or King/Priest)	Zechariah 4; Rev. 11: Witnesses in tribulation
Lampstands	Churches/Word's light	Rev. 1 & 11: United yet distinct

Bottom Line: Olive trees show God's patient plan—pruning unfruitful parts, grafting believers in, and empowering witnesses to light up the darkness. It's all about bearing fruit through faith in Christ, leading to eternal life.

- Shift in Salvation:
    - Jews (two tribes) = "Lo-ammi" ("not My people," Hos. 1:9) due to unbelief—hardened, seeking works not faith.
    - 10 tribes = "Gentiles" here (post-captivity, "not a nation"—Isa. 65:1). They weren't seeking but found God (Hos. 2:23; Rom. 9:25).
    - Result: Jews' slip-up saves Gentiles (10 tribes + others), making Jews jealous to return (Rom. 11:11).
- Olive Tree (Rom. 11:17–24):
    - Root = Christ/Israel's promises.
    - Natural branches (unbelieving Jews) cut off.
    - Wild branches (10 tribes as "Gentiles") grafted in—share richness.
    - Future: Full Jewish remnant grafted back at end of Daniel's 70th week (tribulation).

Riches Multiply: Jews' "fall" blesses world; their "fullness" (repentance) supercharges it (Rom. 11:12). - Fullness of the Gentiles:

Church's Heavenly Role

- Mystery Unlocked (Rom. 11:25): Partial Jewish blindness till "fullness of the Gentiles" (plērōma in Greek = melo in Hebrew from Gen. 48:19).
    - Not: End-times Gentile salvation in Daniel's 70th week (focuses on Israel—Dan. 9:24).
    - Yes: Church's completion at rapture—believers (Jews + Gentiles, esp. 10 tribes) fully "in" (Eph. 3:3–6; Col. 2:10).
- Ephraim Link: "Fullness of nations" = Church surpassing Manasseh (two tribes). Heavenly inheritance > earthly (exceeds Abraham's promises).
- Timeline: Hardening ends at rapture (Gentiles full). Then: Tribulation for Israel; Jews repent at week's end.

Here therefore it is a many-sided picture. What exactly the root and the trunk are does not matter much here. It is only said that if the root is holy, the branches are too.

Romans 11:17
And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
The story begins with that one tree, which is holy. Of that tree branches are broken off. Then there is another tree. From that branches are taken and grafted into the empty places in the first tree.
It turns out to concern two olive trees. One tame and the other wild. The holy tree, from which branches are cut off, is apparently a fruitful tree. That is usually called in the Bible an olive tree rich in oil. In practice olive oil was the only oil people had in antiquity. A good olive tree brought forth not only olives, but also olive oil from them. That is the oil with which kings and priests and possibly prophets were anointed. Olive oil is

considered spiritual life, of eternal life, for olive trees have a very strong regenerative capacity. You would say that regeneration means rebirth, but the term is used for the process whereby dead cells in such a tree are replaced with equally good new cells. That is not so in our body. There too new cells come in place of old, but they are less good than the previous. Then there is degeneration, decline. In principle an olive tree does not die of old age. They are a picture of eternal life. Anointing is a picture of receiving the Holy Spirit.
From the tame olive tree branches are broken off, branches from a wild olive tree come in their place.
The similarity between these two trees is that both are olive trees. The difference is that one is a tame olive tree and the other wild. The tame is expected to bring forth fruit, the wild on the other hand normally brings forth no fruit.
Thus we also know wheat, in the parable of the tares. At night the enemy comes and sows tares, but in reality he sows zizanion. That is wild wheat. That is a plant that looks like wheat, but brings forth no wheat. Then they asked the Lord whether they should pull out the tares, but that should not be, for then perhaps the wheat would also be pulled out. At the time of harvest the difference is seen.
Thus there is also the tame and the wild fig tree. On one occasion there was a tame fig tree, but nothing grew on that tree. Then the Lord cursed that tree. On another occasion there was a wild fig tree and there sat a tax collector in it, Zacchaeus.
We also know the vine and the wild vine, a colocynth.
Where is the olive tree, whether tame or wild, in the Bible a picture of? If you say it briefly, of a witness of the Lord (Zechariah 4; Revelation 11).
In Zechariah 4 you have two olive trees with pipes, which lead the olive oil straight without human intervention into a reservoir. From that vessel the olive oil flows, also without human intervention into a candlestick and thus keeps the candlestick burning. Nowadays that is quite normal with all those gas and water pipes, but in former times you always had to refill. Here therefore it is pictured that without human intervention the candlestick keeps burning through the oil from the olive tree. When Zechariah asked what that meant, the Lord said: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit” (Zechariah 4:6. In other words, not by human activity, but by the working of the Spirit Himself light keeps burning. This speaks in the first place of this present time, but also of the days of the great tribulation, in which the Lord would do His work and in which the Spirit would be active.
In Revelation 11 it concerns the two witnesses, of whom it says: “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” (Revelation 11:4. In other words, they are a picture of the two witnesses, for through them the Spirit, or eternal life, is transmitted or supplied. That is why you can also say more generally that olive trees are a picture of priesthood, because priests are witnesses. The priestly service after all consists in keeping and proclaiming and passing on the word of God. That is why the olive tree is in the first place a picture of Christ Himself, but thereafter also of all who are in Him and therefore the olive tree is a picture of His people, of Israel, for Israel was a royal and priestly people, to proclaim the virtues of the Lord. Where that all works well and is therefore fruitful, we have to do with a good or tame olive tree. See also Jeremiah 11:14–17, where it says that the olive tree is a picture of Israel; Hosea 14:6–7; Deuteronomy 28:40; Isaiah 17:6; Deuteronomy 24:20. From those Scripture passages you can deduce that the olive tree is a picture of Israel. How then? Well, the

olive tree brings forth oil, fatness, as a picture of the Spirit. That Israel would bring forth, for through Israel God wants to accomplish and supply His blessings, His eternal covenant and the like to all mankind.
If branches from that tree are broken off, then that is the Jewish people of those days, because they are unbelieving. Those branches break off. They lose the connection with the trunk and with the root and thereby also with the fathers. The mind of the fathers will be brought to the children = the mind of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their submission to the word of God, will be brought to the last generations of Israel.
If the tame olive tree is a picture of the fruitful part of Israel, then the wild olive tree is a picture of the unfruitful part of Israel and therefore of the ten tribes of Israel. If you do not want to see that, then you get into trouble in the following verses. The idea is that branches from the wild olive tree receive a position on the trunk and root of the tame olive tree. The ten tribes receive part in the blessings intended for the two tribes of Israel. The two tribes did not want those blessings. Those are the broken-off branches. Thereby you could perhaps just think of the Jewish roots of Christianity, but that is on the edge. In reality the situation historically is of course quite different, for Christianity arose outside Judaism. It is rather the roots of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they were not Jews. The blessings in which the church has received part were the blessings God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not to the Jews. Christianity you find precisely with the branches of the wild olive tree. They have become partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree. But it is against nature.

Romans 11:17
And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
Thou = the Gentiles from verse 13 and therefore not arbitrary Gentiles, but Gentiles who come from the wild olive tree and therefore from the ten tribes of Israel.

Romans 11:18
Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.
We should not be arrogant towards the Jews or even the believers from the Jews, for we are as it were but strangers, because we are grafted into that tame tree. That tree bears us and not the other way round.

Romans 11:19
Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.
You might imagine that you are important and that the Jews were broken off for our sake. That makes us more important than the Jews. That may perhaps be so, but then we would realise...

Romans 11:20
Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:
They were broken off because of their unfaithfulness, their unbelief. We stand only by faith. That therefore is no merit. One should therefore not have a high opinion of oneself, but be humble and serviceable.

Romans 11:21
For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.
Here people usually get into trouble, for if these grafted branches on the tame olive tree are the picture of believers, of born-again people, namely of the church and can again be broken off, then that would mean that the church can yet be lost and otherwise members of the church.

Romans 11:22
Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.
That is problematic, for the church cannot be cut off at all. Once you are born again, you cannot be lost. Otherwise you come to the so-called doctrine of the falling away of the saints. It is not about believers, but about the ten tribes in general and those are Gentiles. They take the place of the Jewish people.
We conveniently say that the church has taken the place of Israel, but it is not the church that takes the place of Israel, but the ten tribes that take the place of the two tribes. Those ten tribes are considered a priestly people. Insofar as the Jewish people was a priestly people and therefore the Israel of God, this means in practice that that priestly people is only formed by the believers from it. You can say that you belong to that priestly people, but if you do not fulfil a priestly function, you do not even have the right to say that. Then you would have to answer to the qualities of that people and to the responsibilities of that people. Strictly speaking an unbelieving Israelite is no Israelite, just as an unbelieving Jew is no Jew, but that already stood in Romans 2.In our days the Celto-Anglo-Saxon peoples are that priestly people, but in practice it is only the believers from them. And of course there are Jews among them, but they receive part in the blessings of Ephraim. If a Gentile can receive part in the blessings of the Jew, then the other way round can also.
Verse 22 is therefore a warning to all those nations that officially form part of the ten tribes.
When the church is raptured, the ten tribes remain on earth as an unbelieving people. Then they are immediately also dismissed from the priestly office. Just as once happened to the Jewish people, so it will happen to the ten tribes.

Romans 11:23
And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.
If the Jewish people yet on governmental level accept the Lord Jesus Christ, then they, the broken-off branches, will be placed back on the tame olive tree and therefore in their original position. God is able and therefore has the right to do that.

Romans 11:24
For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?

It still concerns “thou,” the Gentiles from verse 13. Bear in mind also that this epistle was most probably delivered to the British palace in Rome.
Those natural branches will again be grafted in, for…

Romans 11:25
For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
In countless places in the Bible it stands that the Jewish people has become hardened.
Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits = you should not be self-willed, but the word of God is wise.
It no longer says “you Gentiles,” but brethren.
Blindness in part has happened to Israel. That is the Jewish part. Israel has become hardened, but in the first place it is only a part of the people and in the second place it will not remain so. It has become hardened until… There will be a change in that. That points to the fact that the wild branches will yet be cut off and the tame branches will be grafted back in.
Those are events that are interconnected. The rapture of the church is therefore connected with the conversion of the Jewish people.
Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. What event is that? When the fulness of the Gentiles has come in, then that partial blindness of Israel will disappear.
The coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles = up to this moment it was spoken to Gentiles, to the wild branches that are grafted onto the tame tree. It still concerns the Gentiles here. It does not say “until the Gentiles shall have come in,” nor “until the Gentiles shall have become full,” but “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”
Let us analyse it logically for a moment:
The saying = shall be come in.
Something shall come in somewhere. The next question might be: Where shall they come in? That is not stated. The most important question is what the subject of the sentence is. Who or what comes in? Not the Gentiles, but the fulness. What fulness then? A Gentile fulness, for if apostle of the Gentiles means a Gentile apostle, then fulness of the Gentiles means a Gentile fulness. What does that mean then? We already encountered a fulness in verse 12. There it concerns the fulness of the Jews, which stands over against their fall. The fulness there means their conversion. They reach the fulfilment (fulness) of their existence, their calling as a royal priestly people. They reach that through their conversion. If they no longer stumble over the Stone but build on the Stone, or no longer make haste. Then verse 25 therefore concerns the Gentiles who have reached their fulfilment. It therefore concerns those Gentiles who have received their priestly ministry. Those are the ten tribes of Israel, but in practice the believers from them and then that is the church.
Until when therefore does the Jewish people remain hardened? Until the believers from the Gentiles have come in. Where they come in is not set out in the epistle to the Romans. We would enter heaven, enter glory, enter the inheritance, enter the kingdom. That is the rapture of the church, when we shall enter our better fatherland. If Israel in the future comes to its fulness, it will be brought into its fatherland, but the epistle to the Hebrews says that we look for a better fatherland, namely heaven itself. There we go in. That is logical too, for there can be no question of a conversion of the Jewish people

as long as the church is still on earth and fulfils that priestly function. As long as that is so, every believer is added to the church. That also applies to every Jew who comes to conversion. In that way you therefore never get a converted Jewish people, but rather the building up of the church. In this way it can be explained from the context. There was already mention of a fulness of the Jews, which explains what the fulness of the Gentiles is to mean, namely the church.
The other way to explain it is by looking up the expression “fulness of the Gentiles” in the Bible. Perhaps that expression occurs somewhere else. And yes, it occurs in Genesis 48. That makes it hard to find back. In this chapter Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph, whereby he crossed his hands so that Ephraim received the blessing of the birthright. After that he also blessed Manasseh.
Genesis 48:18–19
And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.
And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.
Manasseh was born first, but he did not receive the birthright. Nevertheless he too would become a people and he too would be great. Ephraim however would be greater and his seed would become a fulness of nations.
Fulness of nations = that is not quite how it stands. Fulness = fulness. And therefore a fulness of nations, or fulness of Gentiles. The translators have thought they had to fill it in and have put in the word multitude, whereby the comparison with Romans 11 is missed.
His seed, the seed of Ephraim, will become a fulness of nations.
Nations is the translation of goyim, namely Gentiles. It therefore concerns Gentile nations. Ephraim will become the fulness of the Gentiles.
In everything we already know it therefore stands that the church (that is the fulness of the Gentiles) will come forth from Ephraim. The church is a church of firstborn, with birthright, called unto the adoption of sons. Who from Israel was it again who would receive the birthright? Not Judah, but Ephraim and according to the New Testament not the Jews, but the church. The church is therefore the heir of Ephraim and therefore bearer of the birthright.
Where Ephraim’s father Joseph was, it therefore means that the church is not blessed from Judah, but from Joseph, through Ephraim. That is why in the New Testament you immediately find on the first page someone introduced who is called Joseph. Not unimportant, for he was the legal father of the Lord Jesus. At His rebirth His father was also called Joseph, for He rose from the grave and in the garden and therefore in the house of Joseph of Arimathaea. When eventually the gospel is preached by a Gentile apostle, he is introduced in this work and in his ministry by a certain Joseph, whose name is almost immediately changed to Barnabas. That is not for nothing; that is typology. The promise of birthright to Ephraim is fulfilled in the church of today. If Judah in the future receives the birthright at its conversion at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel, then the birthright of Ephraim, which was promised to him, must first be fulfilled. That must happen after the resurrection of Christ, for earlier there is no inheritance to divide, but before the conversion of the Jewish people.

The legal position of the church lies in some way anchored in Ephraim and that can only be if Ephraim, or the authoritative figure within Ephraim, was the first since the resurrection of Christ to come to faith. That has also happened and moreover through the ministry of Joseph of Arimathaea. He went straight after the resurrection of Christ to Britain and preached the gospel there to the British royal house, with all the consequences thereof. That must have happened that way. It is in accordance with the prophetic word and with biblical symbolism.
Manasseh is passed over in favour of the younger brother Ephraim.
Manasseh is identified through typology with Moshe = Moses. That means that when Manasseh is spoken of in the prophetic word and in history, one thinks of Moses with him. Those names are also almost the same; it differs by only one letter. With Moses you miss the “n” in his name. That is very interesting, because on the other hand in the history of Ephraim there came forth from him Joshua, the son of Nun. The son of the 50. From Manasseh the nun is occasionally missing. There is even in the Old Testament a text where Manasseh stands, while in the original text it is Moses (Judges 18:30). Then they changed the name of Moses to Manasseh, because they found the statement made there not decent enough for Moses and therefore changed it to Manasseh. The Jews then inserted a small raised nun out of reverence for Moses. That is the official story.
If you place Manasseh and Ephraim alongside each other, then Ephraim applies to the church in our days and Manasseh to the Jewish people under the law. The Jewish people under the law is passed over in favour of Ephraim. He is the son of Nun and has inherited that letter “n” = 50 = stands for grace and the unseen things. There is therefore much more behind it than the superficial statements suggest, also in the translation.
Back to Romans 11.

Romans 11:25
For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the rapture of the church. After that the gospel will be preached by the two witnesses in the first half of the seventieth week of Daniel to the Jewish people and in particular in Jerusalem, so that at the end of the seventieth week the highest Jewish authorities on behalf of the Jewish people will call upon the name of the Lord and thus the Jewish people will yet be saved. That also stands in the next verse.

Romans 11:26
And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
If the Jewish people come to faith, Christ will present Himself in Zion and after some time also choose His dwelling there. From there the gospel will be preached to all nations and a new Israelite state will be established, from where the kingdom of the Messiah will be extended to all nations. God is now gathering a people from the Gentiles for His name, based on the promises to Ephraim, while in the future the promises to and from Judah will yet be realised. God is therefore doing a work in our days, but that is a temporary matter. That is important to see, because many within Christianity think that

the church has taken the place of the Jewish people, but they do not want to see that the roles will be reversed again in the future; at least here on earth.
The conversion of the Jewish people will be the work of the church after the rapture of the church. That is not such a well-known thought. When we as believers die, we go to heaven and should the rapture take place before that time, then we are forever with the Lord. What happens after that is generally not thought much about. We however are being prepared in our days for our future with the Lord. We will certainly not spend eternity in idleness. A task awaits us. That task is connected with the adoption of sons to which we were predestinated. One of those tasks is that the church is in the first place responsible for Israel. Therefore one of the most important tasks of the church now is to proclaim the gospel to the Jews. We would after all provoke Israel to jealousy by the proclamation of the gospel. That is so now, but it will also be so in the future.
Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles, the church, has come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. “And so” is of course very important. We easily read over it and often act as if it says “afterwards.” That is also the thrust, for only after the rapture of the church will all Israel be saved.
The salvation of all Israel is causally connected with the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles. The rapture of the church will result in the conversion of all Israel. That is not so easy to explain, because this is connected with the whole prophetic word. There are quite a few prophecies that relate to that. To say it in a few words, the church will after the rapture have such an influence on the conversion of Israel that it will indeed come to faith. That is then also only a remnant and in the days of the great tribulation, but nevertheless all Israel will in that way be saved.
But how can we now preach the gospel to Israel if we are no longer here? The gospel is also preached to us and we think that it is human work, but that is not so. The Lord Himself would do that and He uses staff for that. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14. Christ is the Head of the angels. He is the Archangel. The work of God also happens from heaven, in the first place by the Lord Jesus Himself and in the second place by His heavenly staff. Angels are messengers, who also now do their work. We would in the future be like the angels. Moreover Hebrews 12 says that we have come to the innumerable company of angels, which means that we are therefore heavenly messengers and will be, who from a heavenly position will make known the word of God and thereby do the work of God. Officially that is already so now, but after the rapture of the church our work does not end, but only then begins properly. In the days that we are still in the flesh it is actually only exercise, training.
And so all Israel shall be saved = in this way. In this verse it concerns that at some time all Israel shall be saved, for according to the first verses of this chapter there is in our days only a remnant. A minority. In the future however all Israel shall be saved. Moreover it stands afterwards: “as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”
That is a reference to Psalm 14:7; Isaiah 27:9; Isaiah 59:20; Jeremiah 31:31–34. From these verses Paul distils this sentence. He does not quote literally a complete sentence, but the thought that lies behind those verses.

Romans 11:27
For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

This is the general reference to Old Testament Scripture passages, in which the New Covenant was announced, under which the Lord would no longer remember sins and iniquities. We already live under that, but what is said here is that this will then be applied to all Israel, after the rapture of the church, because in the future all Israel as a people will be placed under that New Covenant. For that there is only the gathering of a remnant and thereby of firstfruits and that is the church. When that is completed the work on Israel as such, as a people, will proceed, with the result that the ungodliness of Jacob is turned away and that the Deliverer will come out of Sion.
The term Sion is somewhat ambiguous. In the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah from Sion is announced, but even there it already has a double meaning, for He comes from Jerusalem, but He also comes from heaven. That is why on occasion the Jews say: "This Jesus, we know from where He comes. We have learned from the Scriptures that when the Messiah comes, no one knows from where He comes." That is correct. This means that they too understood that Sion is a rather vague expression. It may apply to Jerusalem, but yet there is a deeper truth behind it. And indeed, He also comes from heaven, but that is a truth that the Jews to this day do not want to accept. They know Him as the Son of David, perhaps also as the Son of Joseph, but that He would come from heaven as Son of God, they once somewhat assumed, but since the Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that He comes from heaven, the Jews have abjured that idea.
He will therefore come out of Sion and turn away all ungodliness from Jacob. But when the Messiah comes, then the whole church comes with Him. If the coming of the Messiah is the cause of the general conversion of the Jewish people, then it also means that the coming of the church with Christ is the cause of the conversion of Israel. That obviously has to do with the work done by Christ and the church. The Lord Jesus Himself is part of the church, which is a reverse way of saying it. He is after all the Firstborn and the Head of the church and we are added to Him. If therefore it concerns the second coming of Christ, then it concerns the coming of the church. For that we first go to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4).
All Israel = all who are still left of it. Those are the escaped from the sword. Jeremiah 31:2 says: "Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest."
When the New Covenant is made with all Israel, then it is with a remnant that has found grace in the wilderness. That is in the wilderness of Edom, in Petra. That is outside Jerusalem and therefore outside the camp. There Israel will be gathered and will come face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ and there it will definitively come to faith.
In our days it is not yet so and will not become so, for in our days they are officially enemies. They are adversaries and gainsayers.

Romans 11:28
As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.
The Jews therefore are not the elect people. That is a wrong formulation. They were it and they will be it, but they are not it now. We are the elect people of God. They will be it, but only after we are no longer here. God will yet elect them, because He will keep His promises. They are enemies with regard to the gospel.

For your sakes = in relation to you. Obviously not because you want it. Also not because it is our fault, for that is how one reads that word in Genesis. When it says: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake,” one reads it as if the ground is cursed because it is our fault. But it means: “Cursed is the ground in relation to you.” The ground will behave as cursed towards you. If you want to know what that means, try once to set up a vegetable garden. Before spinach comes out of the ground, all thorns and thistles must first be removed and then there are still many workings before it is so.
The Jewish people is enemy of the gospel in relation to us, but because God once elected them they are beloved, for the fathers’ sakes = in relation to their fathers. That makes the relationship between the believers in these days and the Jewish people rather difficult, because they are our enemies and we their friends. They are beloved. By whom then? By us, for the fathers’ sakes. We have received part in the blessings intended for Israel. Whether we now speak of the ten tribes question or simply of Gentiles, that makes no difference in practice. Thanks to their unbelief we have received part in those blessings. Nevertheless they are beloved, because God once made promises to them. At this moment they want no part in those blessings and therefore they are enemies of the gospel on the one hand, but on the other hand beloved for the fathers’ sakes.
They are not elect, but they were and will be again in the future, for…

Romans 11:29
For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.
They are beloved for the fathers’ sakes, because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.
Without repentance = it is not withdrawn. God has spoken and it will not repent Him. He has spoken and there it remains. His word does not change. God will indeed give grace to Israel, whom He indeed called. That the Jewish people at this moment has no part in that is true, but that will change again. It will yet come to conversion, in the future.

Romans 11:30
For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:
We too were disobedient to God in times past.
Ye = ye Gentiles, “for I speak to you Gentiles” (verse 13).
We have obtained mercy through the disobedience of the Jewish people. Through their disobedience we have received part in that New Covenant, for their diminishing was the riches of the Gentiles and their fall the riches of the world (verse 12). That must now be clear.

Romans 11:31
Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.
We were that in the past. They are now disobedient, that they too may yet in the future obtain mercy through us.
We were disobedient in times past;
They are now disobedient.
We have now already obtained mercy;

They will yet obtain mercy.
We have obtained mercy through their disobedience;
They will obtain mercy through our mercy.

Romans 11:32
For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.The last point forms a contrast.
Here therefore the reference is not in general to Gentiles, but to the ten tribes of Israel in contrast to the two tribes. It concerns Israel. We, the ten tribes, were disobedient in the past and were sent away in the Assyrian captivity, but have nevertheless obtained mercy. The ten tribes bore the name Israel and were God's people, but they were carried away into captivity and lost the name Israel. Nevertheless we have obtained mercy at the moment when the two tribes came to the rejection of the Messiah. And so the promised mercy of the New Covenant, of which Christ is the Firstborn, came to us. In our days the Jewish people is unbelieving, but so what? The ten tribes were unbelieving and have come to faith in Christ, and the two tribes are now unbelieving and will come to faith in the future. If therefore you compare the history of the ten tribes and the two tribes, it is the same history. The ten tribes simply run a little ahead. They disappeared earlier into captivity and came earlier to faith in Christ. That is why the church of firstfruits is also mainly from the Gentiles, from the ten tribes. If there are still Jews among them, that is of course possible, for everyone who believes will be added to it. The causal connection between the mercy we have obtained and their disobedience is clear, for their fall and diminishing was to the riches of the Gentiles. The position of the church was among other things therefore caused by the unbelief of Israel.
But if the Jewish people will obtain mercy through our mercy, then this does indeed mean that the conversion of Israel, of the Jewish people, will be caused by the church. Just as the salvation of the church is caused by the unbelief of the Jewish people, so the salvation of the Jewish people will be caused by the mercy of the church. That will not happen until the church has been raptured. Insofar as this stands in the Old Testament, church truth is hidden there. That makes it rather time-consuming to make clear that it concerns the church there. In the New Testament prophetic word is indeed still summarised to some extent, but that happens mainly in a typological way and therefore you again have the same problem. Who would feed and care for the Israelites in the wilderness for 1260 days? That is the church. That is not stated, for it says that the male child would do this (Revelation 12). That is only one, but then it says that they, plural, would feed her. Those are not two different things, but it is the church as one thing and the members of that church as plural.

Romans 11:32
For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.
Them all = these = the Jews.
It does not say that God has concluded that they all should be disobedient. God has concluded them. So "concluded" suddenly becomes a very different word. He has limited them, shut them up, imprisoned them. In Galatians 3 it stands that Israel was shut up under the law. They were prisoners of the law, kept under it.

God has concluded them, limited them. He does not give them those blessings. On the contrary. God has concluded them all under unbelief. They are imprisoned in their own unbelief, or in their own disobedience.
Unbelief is a limitation, although they usually think otherwise and consider faith a limitation. But that is a mistake. Then they confuse religion and faith. Religion is a limitation, because it imposes laws. Faith is a completely different thing and precisely means that one is freed from religion and set in liberty. That is the opposite of limitation and imprisonment.
Someone who is disobedient and rejects the word of God thereby shuts himself off and up. One does not want to know something and places it outside one's own perception and consciousness. God has concluded them under unbelief. What unbelief? That of the preceding verses, namely that of unbelief. They do not want to hear. Very well, then not. Then they remain in darkness, in ignorance and in captivity. Blindness in part has happened to Israel.
He has concluded them all under unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. This is actually inexplicable and yet it is explicable.
"That" in the can indeed also have the meaning of "until." Originally those words do not have different meanings.
Until = up to a certain point in time;
That = up to a certain purpose.
The Bible does not know that difference, because a point in time can never be a purpose in itself. It is not about a point in time, but always about an event.
When Psalm 110 says: "Sit thou at my right hand, until…," you immediately get the misunderstanding, because it is said to the Messiah, that He will sit for some time at God's right hand and then no longer, because it is until. We then think that it stops at some point. In modern language it should have been "that." Sit thou at my right hand, that I may make thine enemies thy footstool. Stronger still, for by His being set at the right hand of His Father, His enemies are set as His footstool. The New Testament says that this has long since happened and that all things are put under His feet (Hebrews 2:8. It may point to something future, but then not to a point in time, but to a purpose. That that event takes place at a certain point in time, yes, that is always so. It is therefore completely superfluous to say that.
God has concluded them all under unbelief, until He might have mercy upon all. "That" cannot simply be, because God wills that all men should be saved. The Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish. In other words, that saving grace of God is also offered to all Jews, even in this present time.
But because they are unbelieving, He keeps them there, He concludes them under that unbelief, for He will yet do something with them. For that purpose they must come to faith, but that will happen in the future, partly through the work that God will do through the church. As long as we are here on earth they remain concluded under unbelief. Not only concluded, but also preserved, for that is what it is about. Not that God cares for the Jewish people so long, but that it is preserved. That it is kept, so that the prophetic word may be fulfilled. That is why the devil is out to exterminate the Jewish people if possible, for if that succeeded, God could no longer fulfil His promises and God would therefore be unfaithful.

When we sing that God holds the whole world in His hand, that does not mean He blesses the whole world, but that He ensures that the world does not perish, for He still has a score to settle with that world.
Of course, He keeps watch over the Jewish people too, but with the sole purpose that it is preserved, so that He may yet in the future fulfil His promises to that people.
This is also exactly what God did with the ten tribes. He sent them away into captivity, but He has preserved them and kept them in being, for He still had something to arrange with them. God had also made promises to the ten tribes and when the time came once and the Jewish people was unbelieving, He ensured that the gospel went straight to Joseph, to Ephraim and thereby to the ten tribes of Israel. What has been realised in our days with regard to the ten tribes will in the future yet be realised with regard to the two tribes.
That is all not so difficult to understand, if you at least know it once, but you would not have come to it yourself. That is what Paul says in the following verses. He therefore concludes this section with a doxology

Doxology
O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?
Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Romans 11:33
O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
The wisdom and knowledge of God are regarded as deep and rich; comprehensive. That wisdom and knowledge are unsearchable.
These words are quite often misused and taken out of their context. Even unbelievers know these expressions, that God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. There is also a good reason for that, for they have no idea what God does. This expression helps with that.
But Paul has just explained in chapters 1–11 how it is with the judgments and ways of God. He does not here state that we cannot know one thing and another, but that we could never have thought it up or invented it ourselves. Insofar as we do know of it, it is because God has revealed it to us. In 1 Corinthians 2 there is also such a verse that people like to misuse.
1 Corinthians 2:9
But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
That is what God has prepared for those who love Him. The thrust is then always that we cannot know all that either, but the next sentence says…
1 Corinthians 2:10
But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

In other words, it does not come up into our hearts, we cannot think it up, invent it, search it out, but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. That is therefore also said here in Romans 11, but we also find words of similar thrust in the Old Testament.
Ecclesiastes 3:11
He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.
The world = the eternal.
God has set the eternal in the heart of man, so that man has an idea of eternity. Not that man knows what it is or how it is, but that it exists. You often still hear that from the mouth of unbelievers. They do believe that there is something after this, but what that is, they do not know. God has set the eternal in man's heart, so that man has knowledge of it. But man cannot find out the work that God has made. To find out is strictly speaking a strengthened form of to find. To find presupposes that something is hidden and if something is hidden according to biblical standards, then it is buried. If you therefore find it, then you have dug it up. In English to invent is the designation for what man thinks up himself, as for example Mr Bell invented the telephone. He did not dig in his back garden and find a telephone there, but he thought it up, for it did not exist yet. Then we call that in modern English to invent. He is not the discoverer of the telephone, for in discovery it was already there; it was only not yet located and dug up.
The Bible says that man does have some idea of the eternal and the Eternal, but he cannot find out the work that the eternal God has made, at least not from the beginning to the end. And therefore the following verses say that man should therefore not aim at that, to find out or discover the work of God, for he cannot do it anyway. And therefore there is nothing better for him in his life than to rejoice and do good. The point is not that man cannot know what God does, he simply cannot invent it himself. To know that he will therefore have to listen to God. And if you still want to use the word invent or discover, then we can only invent or discover it in His word. Outside the Bible that is impossible. The problem however is that everything called theology by definition works outside the Bible. All atheists know that all who are religious invent God Himself. They make themselves their own image of God. Those people are quite right too, but that does not go for you or me. We do not invent God, but listen to what God has said. We read about Him in His word. We do not need to invent Him, any more than we need to invent a telephone. That thing has simply been handed down to us. So it is also with knowledge of God and His work. We do not need to discover that. We cannot do that either. God has revealed it to us, by His Spirit. How does the Spirit do that? By the Scripture, for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. The prophets have spoken by the Spirit of God. The problem of man is that he prefers to invent it all himself instead of listening to the One who has said how it is.
For the last there is no honour for man to gain.
Ecclesiastes 8:17
Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.
He saw the work of God that he cannot find out. How then can he see it? This does not fall into the category "the Bible is full of contradictions," for that is not so. He knows it, because God has revealed it. A wise man can know it. Someone who knows it is according to biblical standards wise anyway. Such therefore exist and we as believers

should belong to them. We listen to the word of God and thus become wise, because we learn to understand the truth. Not because we invent it, for that is not wise. We learn to understand it by listening.
Job 37:23–24
Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.
Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.
Back to Romans 11.

Romans 11:33
O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
Wisdom and knowledge are synonymous concepts. They mean more or less the same. Insofar as there is any difference, wisdom stands for what thoughts produce and knowledge for a wisdom that has been gathered by study and/or experience.
One can become wise from practice, but one can also become wise by thinking a lot. In practice you do both. Whether you have your knowledge from practical experience or from a book, in both cases it is knowledge.
Unsearchable are His judgments;
Past finding out are His ways.
That is twice the same thing.
Judgments = comes from the word krima. We know it as crisis, but also as circle, for circle is related to crisis.
Crisis = a turning aside. A certain way is taken. When there is talk of judgments, this also means that measures are taken and that a way is therefore determined.
The etymological dictionary gives: distinction, decision.
God's judgments therefore correspond to God's ways, with the way He goes. Changes He brings about and directions He indicates. Whether they are unsearchable or past finding out, there is also no difference there.
In Isaiah 55 there are also similar expressions about the ways of God, but there the ways of God are synonymous with the thoughts of God.
Isaiah 55:7–9
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
And because His ways and thoughts are higher than ours, you should therefore listen to Him.
Isaiah 55:3
Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.
Listen to Him and He will place you under the New Covenant.
Simply listen and God reveals Himself. That is normal, for that is what God does.
John 1:1
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 John 1:1
That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;
God has spoken from the beginning.
Hebrews 1:1–2
God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son…God speaks, by definition. If a man does not know, then it is his own fault. That simply comes because he has no interest and does not listen, does not obey and is therefore unfaithful. That is sin. The essence of sin is that one does not listen. The words pass by and therefore miss their target. One has no connection with the speaking (living) God. One can know and one would also know.

Romans 11:34
For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?
The mind = the thoughts, the disposition, but also the intention. If you have something in mind, then you have a certain intention.
Who has been His counsellor? Who knows more about it? With whom has God consulted beforehand? It is of course a rhetorical question. The answer to the question is known. No one.
We can therefore also better stop advising God, for He is by definition not advised.

Romans 11:35
Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
Who has first given Him counsel or advice? Who has first given something to God and then receives something back from Him? It is a persistent misunderstanding that we must first give something to God and that He then perhaps gives something back to us. It is not entirely beside the truth, but yet it is fundamentally incorrect. We do not give Him something, He gives us something. God cannot be served by men's hands, He does not dwell in houses made with men's hands, for He is Himself the One who gives to man life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:24–25.Romans 11:36
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.
With the emphasis always on Him. For He is the Source, the Cause of things, both as regards the present, the past, and the future. That is expressed in the prepositions.
Of = origin, source;
Through = by means of;
To = with a certain purpose.
The prepositions express that God does indeed do a work, which has its origin somewhere in the past. It must also lead to a purpose in the future and it is His work. That it is through Him is also a shock for many, for in general people think of God as something static, as something that does nothing. One develops a static image of the cosmos, of the world and one perhaps also invents a deity in it. One takes no notice of Him anyway, for He is static and therefore does not move.
But God has a plan and does a work. Parts of that work He has already done in the past and does not do in the present. And things He does in the present He will not do in the future, for He is now gathering a people of firstfruits and He will not do that later.

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18.He is the Source of things, but it also serves to Him.
The work of God is also not a work unto the salvation of sinners. It is not incorrect in itself, but it is not the purpose. His work is a work unto the righteousness of God. In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. It therefore does not concern the salvation of sinners, but the justification of God Himself. His name is after all blasphemed and His reputation is in question, because one sees that this world created by God is far from perfect. God is as it were called to account. But He has already accounted for that, only people do not want to listen to that. He does a work, whereby His righteousness at the end of the story proves to be above all doubt, for to Him are all things.
He does a work unto the glorification of His name. But is that not necessary, because He is God? That is necessary, for His name is blasphemed, already from Genesis 3. We also do not want our words to be quoted differently than we meant them?
God will also demonstrate why this world is as it is. This world is as it is, so that the works of God might be revealed in it. Why was that man born blind? What did he do wrong, or his parents perhaps? That has nothing to do with it, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. The man born blind is a picture of Israel, but because Israel itself is again a picture of the whole world, he therefore applies to the whole creation. Why? Because the works of God are therefore demonstrated in it and because the attributes of the Godhead are proved and thereby established.
What then is the purpose that all things are of Him, through Him, and to Him?
That stands afterwards...

Romans 11:36
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.
Namely to whom be glory for ever. It concerns His glory and that for ever. Regardless of what there may have been before Adam and how long that lasted. The biblical thought is that the world in which we live is not the final version. God's work is not yet finished. He would not create this world, but new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. However often it stands that it was good, nowhere does it stand that it was finished. The whole rest of the Bible concerns that, namely how God finishes His creation.
God delivered Israel out of Egypt, but with that the story was not finished. God brought them into rest, but with that they were not yet in rest. The history would repeat itself several times. God promised David a son and he received him, but was that him? Yes and no. He was a picture of the One who would come. Well, that does not stand about the Son of David, but about the Son of Adam. Adam was a figure of Him that was to come. In short, the work is not finished. It will only be completed on what we call the last day. After that it only really begins properly. God first lays a foundation for the world He would make. He is still doing that. When we want to have part in the world God would make, well, then we should qualify for that now. That is not so difficult. You only need to take the ticket. You only need to put your trust in what God has announced and so you receive part in it.
The human misunderstanding is that man exalts himself above everything and sees himself as the purpose. He perhaps sees his own salvation as the purpose. That is not what it is about. He is the Purpose. His work will be completed and we by grace would have part in that. That therefore our lives as believers would be to His glory, that can be

guessed, for everything God does is to His glory. Not exclusively, for we may share in it, but yet, to His glory. And although now His name is blasphemed, it will yet prove that God will make all things in this old sinful world work together for good and therefore to His righteousness and glory and to a demonstration of His grace and mercy and goodness and however the virtues of God may be called.
Even if you do not count the Psalms there are countless times in the Bible that it is all to His glory. That is what it is all about and we should conform to that. We do that by simply listening to Him.
With that we are back to the main line in this epistle, for in chapter 12 it continues with: "I beseech you therefore…"

Romans 12:1
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
This is therefore the third part of the epistle, but in another sense the second half, as is also evident from the opening words of this chapter.
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.
From this point onwards Paul speaks directly to regenerate people in connection with the question: what now?
In the preceding chapters, especially chapters 1 to 8, he spoke about how the sinner is justified by faith before God and thus receives a share in the resurrection life of Christ and is thereby saved for ever by faith. For many believers that was the end of it. That may well be the case, because in a great many Christian denominations it never goes any further. People often do not get beyond the question of whether a person is saved and how easy or difficult that is; whether one can be sure of it, and so on.Yet the greatest part of the entire New Testament message is addressed to and directed at people who are regenerate and who also know that this is so for ever. It is precisely to them that these words are directed. So also here: "I beseech you therefore, brethren…" This is therefore addressed to believing people, for otherwise they would not be called brethren.
Normally believers pray to God, but here Paul prays to the believers and he obviously does so on behalf of the Lord Himself. God asks us whether we are willing to do something. That is quite different from our asking the Lord whether He is willing to do something.
It concerns how Paul formulates this and how he speaks about the practical walk of life, the state of believers. In chapters 1 to 8 he spoke about our standing, our position. The intention, however, is that a believer should not only stand but also walk. It is now about that walk and therefore about the state, the circumstances of the believer. Those are two different things which in practice cannot be separated from one another.
I beseech you therefore = on the ground of what has gone before I ask you. Everything that comes after "therefore" must be seen in the light of what preceded "therefore." The following therefore cannot be placed or understood if you have not understood what went before. If you do not know the foundation of the gospel, namely that the Lord Jesus Christ bore the sins of the world and that by faith in Him one has a share in that forgiveness of sins, but also in His resurrection life, if that is not firmly established, then you can do nothing with the following section either. Unfortunately this is the case in the greater part of Christendom. People often do not know the difference between what the

Lord did in the past and what He has done since then. This section does indeed speak about good works which God has prepared, that we as believers should walk in them. Those things are not said to unregenerate people, for one is not saved by good works in which we should walk. People often think that and therefore mix those things up. We are saved without works, by faith; that is the preceding chapters. Now that we are once saved, without works and by faith, the intention was that we should live by faith and walk in the good works which God has prepared. Some are then utterly shocked that they are supposed to work again. That is not required, but it is regarded as a blessing that we may do so.

I beseech you therefore on the ground that we are justified by faith and have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Therefore this is asked of us.

How so then? What preceded? The mercies of God. Which mercies of God? Those of chapters 1 to 8. But also those of chapters 9 to 11, which taken together are regarded as commentary on Romans 1 to 8, namely that you who were once not a people are now the people of God. Because we have become children of God and thereby also servants of God; not in order to obtain mercy, but because we have obtained mercy, not in order to be born again, but because we are born again, we are asked to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. As firstborn we are called to be placed as sons.

We should well realise that these things have in the first place to do with priesthood. That term is admittedly not mentioned in this epistle, but that is indeed what it concerns. One becomes a priest by birth. One therefore does not need to meet certain requirements for that, for one is born that way. That has consequences. One can indeed be a child of God and saved for ever, but that does have consequences. That position brings responsibility with it. Noblesse obliges. Now that we have been made able to be ministers of the New Covenant, the Lord expects that we in the practice of our lives also actually serve Him. Those who were made able to be ministers of the Old Covenant were called priests. We are ministers of the New Covenant and therefore we are also priests. We, however, are not priests after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec.

A priest would offer. Not a lamb, a sheep or a dove, but himself. A priest would present himself to the high priest to make himself available for service. He would then say: “Behold, here am I, to do thy will, O Aaron.”

The Old Testament is a picture of the New Testament, so that we as priests would present ourselves to the High Priest of the New Covenant and say to Him: “Behold, here am I, to do thy will, O Lord.”

We should be followers of Christ. When He rose from the dead He said to God: “Behold, here am I, to do thy will, O God.” God then appointed Him High Priest. Then He offered Himself, namely His body. We should be His followers and therefore we do exactly the same. Therefore we should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

We therefore place our bodies at God’s disposal. We admittedly need do nothing, but the Lord asks everything of us, our whole life. For we are His property after all. It is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me.

Christ offered His body, namely the church, for we are His body. He comes to do the will of God and in that will we are sanctified. It was the will of God that He should offer His

body, in which will we are sanctified. In other words, when He offered Himself in His capacity as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, He offered the whole church and thereby placed the whole church in the service of God. As a consequence thereof we, because we belong to His body, should also place our bodies at His disposal. Logically so, for that is the will of God for your life. After that follows life in His service and from His hand.

If therefore we are priests, this means that everything we do is done in service to Him. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Colossians 3:23. Our ordinary daily work, which probably has nothing at all to do with the Lord, but with worldly matters, is because we are priests also priestly work. We should also see it as such and do it as such. That has nothing to do with the ministry of the word or with church life or anything else, but because we are priests we do it for the Lord and therefore with full devotion and as well as possible. Whether the work we do is useful or not has nothing to do with it, and it is not for us to judge whether it is useful or leads anywhere. It would at any rate lead to our learning to serve the Lord. God's work in this present time is that He makes us able for His service. We are trained in that and learn to be faithful, to trust in Him. We should therefore be conscious that we do not do things for people, but always for the Lord. Not because the work is for the Lord, but because we belong to the Lord. That makes all work for the Lord. If we have learned that, then we are sons.

A living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Is our body then living? The body is dead because of sin, but alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:10–11. We are made alive according to the standard of the new man. If God places His life in it, then the body is living. Our mortal bodies are still mortal, but made alive. We should present our members as instruments of righteousness.

Our bodies are also holy, since the Holy Spirit dwells in them. Someone is holy if he is placed in the service of God. Because we are born priests we are holy anyway, for even the priests under the Old Covenant were sanctified for the service of God. There were even holy tongs. They were at any rate needed at the altar of burnt offering. Those objects certainly did not look fine, for they were used, but they were holy things, holy vessels. They were sanctified because they were devoted to the service of God. So the epistles to the Corinthians were written to the sanctified in Christ. Those people did not walk so holy there, as the contents show, but they are saints according to their standing, not according to their state. So it is with us too. We come to faith, thereafter we are holy, because we are sanctified in the service of God. Saints are set apart, with the purpose of devotion to the service of God.

A sacrifice acceptable unto God. The question is not whether it is acceptable to us. Nowadays other people decide how we should serve God, especially in the many institutionalised churches. That usually comes down to how it pleases us. What we have thought up again. That however plays no role at all. It concerns what God has thought up and laid down in His plan of the ages. To that we should submit ourselves. It is obviously not the intention that we make a plan and ask the Lord whether He is willing to submit to it and join in. He would do a work and He asks us whether we are willing to join in and submit to it. That is acceptable unto God.

If you do not know what the Lord wants of you, then there is only one answer, namely that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. That is very essential, because everything that follows is based on that. All the rest will never have any effect if there is not first an official acknowledgement that on the ground of our regeneration we are devoted to the Lord. We should also give that acknowledgement to the Lord, by saying: “Lord, here am I…”
We are in any case placed in His service and we should acknowledge that.
In the epistle to the Hebrews it says that we come boldly unto the throne of grace. That is 100% the same as presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, sits on that throne. You approach that throne to say: “Here am I, to do thy will.” You kneel or bow or fall on your face, whereby your submission to that High Priest is evident.
When we approach Him we receive mercy. He gives you something to do and fills your hands. You get a job, just like that, a gift. That is called receiving mercy. At the throne of grace we receive mercy and help in time of need. You get a job and if it is too heavy for you, the One from whom you received the job will help you with it. If you do not know what to do with it, then you go back to the One who gave you the job and lay it before Him. He gives you all you need for it and He will perfect His strength in our weakness. That is the basis of what the Bible calls spiritual life or Christian life.
Service = religion, for that is what it actually says, with reference to the situation under the Old Covenant, for that is regarded as religion.
Religion after all is that a man does works to make himself acceptable to God. We are delivered from that and therefore also from religion. We are not religious, but believers and that is the opposite of it.
Insofar as we then have a religion and would give something to God, then you would place yourself fully 100% at God’s disposal. That is our reasonable service.
Reasonable = logical = logikos = concerning the logos. According to reason.
If we are born of God, then it is logical that we as children of God stand in His service. The following verses indicate what the consequence of that will be.

Romans 12:2
And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
And = this comes only afterwards.
This world = this age.
Mind = thinking.
Conformity to the world does not lie in visible things, but in our thoughts. Our life does not consist in the things we do, but in the things we experience. It therefore concerns how we experience things. Our walk has little to do with our feet, but much more with our thinking. Conformity to the world is that we think as the world thinks.
The law leaves the heart empty. The change of thinking can only come about after we have first presented our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Your thinking is changed when you take in other information. Man’s thinking is not very strongly controlled. Think of that story of the white bears. It seems as though man is free in his thinking, but that is not so. But even though thinking is not fully controllable, it can certainly be influenced by the information we take in. Taking in information is nothing other than eating, spiritual food. Where on the one hand we are critical about what we

eat, there we should on the other hand be critical about the information we take in. You do not need to see everything and you do not need to listen to everything. If you are a bit mature, then you know what is good for you and what is not and therefore you also know how to choose in that.
We are therefore transformed in our thinking by letting ourselves be taught by the Lord. That is the only way our thoughts can be changed, by giving understanding attention to the word of God. That changes our thinking and therefore the inner man and thereby also our experience. How we experience things depends to a high degree on how we think and that depends to a high degree on how and what information we take in.
But why should we as priests be taught if we are not planning to do any priestly work anyway? And we have therefore not presented our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Then you also have no use for instruction in the word of God. That is why so many believers have little interest in it. They were not planning to place their bodies at the Lord's disposal anyway. Sometimes they say they are, but in practice they do not think about it. Then Bible study also has no purpose, for it will not change the mind. You then at most learn some interesting things about the Bible. That then seems very spiritual, but in practice it means nothing.
Changing your thinking is not even the goal in itself, for why must our thinking be changed? That we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. That we may inwardly perceive and therefore experience and find out what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.
First we place ourselves at disposal and only then will we for ourselves experience, in our life, what the Lord wants of us. No one else can tell you that and even the Bible cannot tell you that, but we should prove it in practice. Should that be too difficult, we will at any rate prove what is not the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God for our life. Then you can at least cross that off. That is already good progress. There are after all things in which you are not good or which you simply cannot do. Then it simply stops. That is then not for you, but laid up for another. On the other hand, if the Lord gives you something to do, or you think the Lord gives you something to do, then you will have to venture it. You do everything you do unto the Lord and not unto men anyway. In practice you do learn what place the Lord has given you in the church. For the time being, for that can also change in the course of time, through changed circumstances. That is in the course of your own spiritual development, for that is what it is all about. The purpose is to carry out the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. That too has a purpose in itself, namely that you grow to maturity, but that is not your responsibility, but of the One by whom you are brought up. We should not henceforth live the rest of our time in the flesh to the will of the Gentiles, but to the will of God. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine in righteousness. Why? That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. That we should be made able, also in the practice of our life, to walk in the good works which God has prepared beforehand.
You were not saved by works, but most certainly unto good works. Which works are those? Well, we have become a priestly people and are built up a spiritual house and then you are again exactly at the same subject. That is the purpose of our life and we should reach out to that and that begins by simply saying to the Lord: "Here am I, to do thy will." But if you make yourself available, it is of course also expected that you are available. There is a good chance that the Lord will ask something of you at a moment

when it does not suit you at all. Then the question is whether you are available and remain so at the promise you made to the Lord.

Romans 12:3
For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
The grace is Paul's ministry as apostle. It refers namely to the gift, namely to the course set before him by God. We approach the throne of grace and we receive grace, mercy and help in time of need. Paul also did that and he received grace. That was not only forgiveness of sins, but also a job. Because of the course he received, because of the good and acceptable will of God for his life, he now says to the Romans and therefore also to us how things stand with us. He says that we too have received grace, that God also gives us something to do and also sets a course before us.
Paul says that we should not be self-willed, wise above a certain measure. We should be wise to a certain measure. You can as it were measure, that wisdom. We have received from the Lord a limited, a moderate responsibility. There are things that do not fall under our responsibility. You should for interest's sake look up the word "moderation" or "measure" or "portion" in the Bible and especially in the New Testament. You would be surprised how often that term is used in this same connection. "Rule" is also such a word. A rule is a measure, and a measure is a rule. That is why we often call it for clarity a measure. In all cases it is a certain dimension, a standard that is set. We should remain within that. Preferably further within than outside.
What measure is that then? Well, according as God has dealt to every man. God gives us namely, He deals to us something. God gives us grace, namely a certain gift and possibly certain gifts, within the church.
We are after all members of the same body, but the members do not all have the same function and therefore also not the same responsibility. That is that different measure it concerns. God deals that out. It is after all His grace. We should not go outside that. God has dealt to every man the measure. He has set us a limit. He does not give us more than we can bear, than what lies within our reach. That is also the art of bringing up and also of the employer, that he does not let his child or employee do things he cannot carry out, that go beyond him. The art is to remain within that measure. Not too much within, for then you do not have enough from your staff. Then there is much more in it than you get out. That is also so with children; it must not be too easy, for then they learn nothing. It must also not be too difficult, for then they collapse. The art is therefore to know the limit, that as educator or employer you do not go beyond it, for then it goes wrong. So God gives us something to do, according to a certain measure. The question is what is determinative for that measure. That is faith. If you do not know what the word faith does in a certain verse, then you fill in faithfulness. So, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faithfulness. God does not deal out faithfulness or faith, but that measure. He does that on the basis of our faithfulness, of our faith.
Faithfulness is a relative concept. Faithfulness is not merely a virtue. Faithfulness has to do with what we can bear. If you place a heavy load on a table, then the thing collapses under its legs. The table cannot help that, for it simply does not have stronger legs. If you place too heavy a load on a man, then he too collapses under his legs, for he

simply cannot bear it. Some things we cannot bear emotionally. There are after all things for which we are not suited and therefore the Lord does not give us something to bear that we cannot bear. There are also things you cannot bear physically. When the Lord in Matthew 25 calls His servants to Him, He gives one so many talents, another so many talents and yet another so many talents, to every man according to his several ability. So everyone according to what he can bear. Talent here is not the designation of someone's natural aptitude, or of an aptitude the Lord suddenly gives, which was not there before, but of the responsibility the Lord gives to His servants. That is not the same to everyone, for they are simply different. He gives something to bear that suits them and that they can bear. Whereby therefore the strongest shoulders bear the heaviest loads. The Bible teaches that people are earthen vessels. They would be filled with oil (Elijah). The house is filled with vessels. The house is the church; the vessels that are fetched are the Gentiles who come to faith. They are placed in that house and receive part in the citizenship of Israel. What happens to those vessels, only after they have first been brought into that house? Then they are filled.
Not the same amount in all vessels, but they are all equally full. There is not the same amount in each, but that is not the point either. The point is that they should all be full. Those earthen vessels are namely not all the same size. So it is with us too. Our body, the person we are, one is larger than another. That does not matter, they are filled. That is why each receives a different number of talents, namely according to his ability. That is a fixed biblical principle. We should be filled with the Spirit. How much Spirit is then in it does not matter, as long as it is full.We should therefore be wise to moderation, according as God has dealt to every man that measure and that measure is on the basis of what we can bear and what the Lord expects from our own personal life.

Romans 12:4
For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
These are the same members as in chapter 6. We have different functions. Hands are not meant for walking on, though some people can do it, but that is not what they are intended for. You had therefore better not do it.
A body is called a body because it is indeed one, yet consists of different parts. The different parts that together form that unity therefore constitute a body.
If we are the body of Christ, then this automatically means that we are not all the same and therefore do not all have the same function and therefore do not all have the same responsibility. The continuation of the matter is that one member should not interfere with another member. What applies to one part of the body does not automatically apply to another part of the body. Each is part of that unity and exists for the sake of that unity. After that everything is different.
1 Corinthians 12:4–6
Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
Three sentences with the same structure, but with the words changed. You should therefore set them one under the other.
Diversities of gifts, the same Spirit;
Differences of administrations, the same Lord;
Diversities of operations, the same God.

You add these together.
There are diversities of gifts, namely of administrations, namely of operations. Gifts are administrations and administrations are operations.
It is the same Spirit, namely the same Lord, namely the same God, for God is the Spirit and the Spirit is the Lord.
It is that one Lord who works in us and He gives different gifts, namely administrations. He therefore gives us an administration. Not the ability for an administration, although within the framework of the Corinthian epistle sometimes also, but it is an administration. We already had the ability for that administration, or it is still further developed. If you have strong legs and are given a load to carry, it means that your legs only become stronger.
He therefore gives us a service, an administration. What is that? An operation. It is one Lord, but not one and the same administration.
The whole body would indeed do something, but the responsibility for the body parts is not the same as the responsibility of the whole body. The whole body is governed by the Head and the various organs of that body have their own responsibility. Those do not even need to consult with one another. Each member does its own thing. Our kidneys are not responsible for pumping the blood through the body. But if the heart does not work and the blood is not pumped through our body, then the kidneys do not work either. Nevertheless the pumping of the blood is not the responsibility of the kidneys. We have our own function in the whole and should in general not interfere with the whole. That is not our responsibility, but that of the Head. We place ourselves at His disposal and He organises His body. He provides the body with organs. If you organise a company, then it means that you place the right people in the right place. That has been forgotten, for nowadays organisation consists of rules and schedules and the like. People then have to adhere to them. But that is no organisation. If you have the right people in the right place, you no longer need all those regulations and rules. The Lord takes no notice of our schedules; He chooses the right people in the right place and therefore you are the suitable person for it. He sees to that. After that you can zoom in and there is still one thing and another to explain, also from the Bible, but this is fundamental and applicable to every one of us, namely that every believer has a place in that one body.

Romans 12:5 - 8
So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
In other words, God gives us a place in that body, not in this world, but in that body. That is what is taught in all these epistles.
Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.
As the translators have inserted, we should use our gifts.
Whether = depending on what gift we have received.
Here there is an record, but it is rather arbitrary. There is no such thing as a fixed list of gifts in or to the church. Insofar as there is one, we have different enumerations in different Scripture passages. Obviously by way of example. The number is also arbitrary.

Here we find seven:

- Prophesying;
- Ministering;
- Teaching;
- Exhorting (comforting = parakaleo. The work that the Comforter does);
- Giving;
- Ruling (standing in front, in the sense of being an example, leading the way, giving direction. It is the work of the shepherd who goes before the flock.);
- Showing mercy.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 nine gifts are enumerated, but they are called quite differently there:

- The word of wisdom;
- The word of knowledge;
- Faith;
- The gifts of healing;
- The working of miracles;
- Prophecy;
- Discerning of spirits;
- Divers kinds of tongues;
- The interpretation of tongues.

There is also an enumeration in 1 Peter 4:10–11:

- Speaking as the oracles of God;
- Ministering as of the ability which God giveth.

Speaking as the oracles of God corresponds to what elsewhere is called an overseer. Ministering as of the ability which God giveth corresponds to what elsewhere is called a deacon.
The work of the Lord in the church is divided into two parts.
Prophesying according to the proportion of faith. We should know that proportion in our life. The first category has to do with the ministry of the word and the other category has to do with household matters
.In Ephesians 4 there is also an enumeration. Now not the gifts or responsibilities are named, but the responsible ones. God gives to the church:

- Apostles;
- Prophets;
- Evangelists;
- Teachers.

The descriptions are in general very broad. They mainly indicate that there is difference. Moreover, every believer should find out for himself what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God for him. That many here understand nothing of it comes because with them everything in the church is regulated by statutes and the like. They have no idea what an ordinary layman in that whole should do or not do, for everything is organised after all.
There is however only one church, in which everything is organised by the Head. And if He does not do it, then we certainly do not need to do it either.
Let us therefore use those gifts, each according to his measure.
Whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith. The gift of prophecy does not exist in our days. Nevertheless people in many cases try to appropriate that gift of

prophecy to themselves. They do that by usually first giving it a different meaning. Prophecy = the word of God is spoken without the Bible in between. God speaks through someone whom He Himself has appointed for that. But now God no longer gives that gift. He used that gift to produce these New Testament Bible books and since then God has nothing more to say. We therefore no longer know that gift. The preaching of the word of God is therefore not called prophecy, but is either teaching or exhorting, whereby exhorting, in the sense of encouraging, is actually also a form of teaching. The same applies to other so-called miraculous gifts and in particular to speaking in tongues. Those are not given by God in our days.
Whether ministry, in ministering. Under that you can understand every gift within the church, for it is service. A chairman in English is called a minister = servant. Our ministers are expected to be servants of the crown.
Whether he that teacheth, in teaching. Seems clear enough.
Whether he that exhorteth, in exhortation.
If that is someone's gift, then he should simply do it, within his measure.
He that giveth, with simplicity, without ulterior motives. One has only one purpose. Giving you can also do for example to get into good favour with others by it.
He that ruleth, with diligence. That must be so, for someone who leads must know what he is doing, for otherwise he holds up the rest.
He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. If you show mercy, you come into contact with the misery of others. If you cannot remain cheerful in that, then you had better not do that work.
In these verses it is not so much about these being the gifts and that you can choose one, but it is by way of example, that one should also remain faithful in it.
If in practice you receive such a responsibility, then it is not for the occasion, but for life. There can be some change and some growth in that, but fundamentally it remains the same course.
After this it simply continues, but now it no longer speaks about a specific responsibility that every believer in the church should have, but it speaks about the general characteristics of the Christian life. Now it speaks about what you might call Christian ethics. That does not consist of some commandments, let alone the ten. Instead we are given in the subjunctive a number of things of how it should approximately be. Not that we should do exactly what stands here, for many of those things cannot be done on command, but that we should set these things as a norm for ourselves. We do not live under the law after all, but it is certainly permitted to describe the characteristics of that life in Christ in believers. Galatians 5:22 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. There they are enumerated in one verse, but here it is said rather more extensively. They are characteristics of the Christian walk of life. The characteristic of that is love, unfeigned love.

Mutual love

Romans 12:9
Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
Let love be without dissimulation = I wish that love be without dissimulation. That is how it should be. In the next verse it stands: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." That is more or less the same, namely love one another from the heart.

Let love be without dissimulation seems to be the summary of the whole rest of this chapter. It is as it were the heading above this pericope. Then the pericope therefore begins with: “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” So it also ends: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Verse 10 again corresponds quite well with verse 20, only then it is not about a brother, but about an enemy. That seems strongly like a contrast, but there are just as well enemies among our brethren. There are Scripture passages in which children of God behave as enemies of the gospel. It therefore seems here more to concern the same thing, about the brethren.
This structure, whereby beginning and end correspond with one another, occurs very often. That is a classic literary form.
Let love be without dissimulation. The emphasis is not so much on that we should love one another, though we should do so. There is even one New Testament Bible book that is entirely about that; the first epistle of John.
Here it does not say: “Love one another,” but let love be without dissimulation. Do not therefore pretend that you love one another. As believers we should not become actors. That is a polite term for what the Bible calls hypocrite or dissembler or Pharisee. That is the situation under the law. There one must do all sorts of things and therefore one pretends. That can namely be done. That is why the Bible teaches that under the law one automatically becomes a dissembler. The Lord Jesus says to the orthodox Jews: “Ye hypocrites.” They maintain fine theories and forms, but inwardly it is empty. The summary of that is: whited sepulchres. We can agree to look at the white plasterwork and not realise that it is in a grave, but it is there of course.
But let love be without dissimulation. Do not pretend. Let it be real. That has from of old been the characteristic of the believer. Only then is there also communication possible, exchange of thoughts, living.
Can love then be without dissimulation? There are a great many things we have in our own hand, for which we ourselves must choose. Where does it go wrong in the lives of some people? Why does it never come right with them? Why do they always need help? Because they cannot choose. If they do choose, they keep the idea with them that they have chosen wrongly. But choosing is choosing and then going for it. That gradually no longer belongs to our culture. People leave it to circumstances. People complain about everything that happens to them, as if they themselves have no hand in it, as if they cannot prevent it.
Abhor that which is evil. We as religious people think that it concerns emotion. We have also replaced religion with emotion. Religion is not a matter of emotion, but of choosing. When we come to faith that is a matter of choosing. If we want to serve God, then we choose for that and stick to it.
Turn away from evil. You can simply choose for that too. How do you do that? By saying to yourself: “I do not want to know it.” You turn away from it. You cannot do anything about it anyway. It is all pollution.
Turn from evil. You must choose for that. There is no one who obliges you to keep up with the news; there is no one who obliges you to stay on the phone. You do not need to burden yourself with anything. Filth keeps going through your head. That is not good. Instead, cleave to that which is good. That is simply a matter of choosing. Cleave to the good. It is a direction that you yourself give to life. You do not need to join in with all sorts of things in the world. Certainly not with what is called the modern communication society. It is one big gossip den in the world. You are kept busy with all

sorts of nonsense that you do not need to know, that is of no use to you and that only brings pollution. That is no communication, but simply chatter.

Romans 12:10
Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;
Not just: “Love one another,” but be kindly affectioned one to another from the heart. Not because it must be, but because it arises from within. Can that be done? Certainly, but the concept of love is always made so mysterious.
Love = agape = in practice simply synonymous with serving.
Love seeks not her own. No, for she seeks what is another’s. We seek the good of the other. That means, we serve one another.
What then is the love of God? You can philosophise about it, but what do you think of: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. He did something. Or, God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. There God demonstrates His love; there He practises His love.
To love God is to serve God. The emotions that may accompany that we cannot summon, at least not on the spot, but we can simply practise that love. Where that is done, the corresponding feelings arise naturally. The affection then develops. When one serves someone, an emotional bond arises naturally. It happens that when a woman is taken hostage, she falls in love with the hostage-taker. How does that come? Because one is suddenly subordinate and has nothing more to say. Then an emotional bond arises with the one to whose will one is delivered. This is of course an extreme example. If you begin to serve the Lord, then you will begin to love the Lord. If you do not serve the Lord, then you will also not have the corresponding emotion.
Agape therefore does not stand for the emotion, but for the work, for serving. You can choose for it. In Western culture one marries the one one loves and in more Eastern cultures one learns to love the one with whom one marries. The latter can also work very well. Since Romanticism one must necessarily marry the one on whom one has fallen in love. Whether that is wise is still the question. You can choose to love someone. That is why it can also stand that you must love your enemies. But you would at least love the Lord by serving Him.
Be therefore kindly affectioned one to another, with full devotion, with brotherly love. That love is called philadelphia. That is love in the sense of affection, in the sense of emotion.
From agape philadelphia develops. We should first realise that we as children of God are each one loved by God. As a consequence thereof we should at least serve one another, because we are after all the object of that love of God and planted in one and the same church. That is where it begins, with that knowledge. And where we serve one another, an emotional bond will also arise from that. Whether you should be glad about that? It can namely also bring a great deal of sorrow. Nevertheless, that is how it would go. We should be conscious that we are bound to one another and that the same Lord works in you and me. He evidently does that in different ways, just as parents must bring up one child differently from another, because they are very different. And therefore they are treated differently. We are all different and therefore our heavenly Father deals differently with us. That is why He also gives us a different function in His church and therefore we should also not interfere further with that.

In honour preferring one another.
That is a difficult sentence, in which it is said that we should respect one another.

Romans 12:11
Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
Not slothful in business and fervent in spirit are two expressions for the same thing.
In business = what you do you should do with full commitment.
In Ecclesiastes it is given as advice to all people. That also gives satisfaction. We as children of God are expected to be diligent.
Spirit is the designation of the inner man. You are activated from within.
Serving the Lord. In fact that also means the same thing. Everything you do you should do heartily unto the Lord. You therefore do it for God and not for men. We are after all servants of Christ. It is not only: we serve the Lord, but we are His servants. Therefore we should do everything we do as unto the Lord. With full commitment of course.

Romans 12:12
Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;
It is not for nothing that these three short sentences stand in one verse, for it is also approximately three times the same thing. Hope, being patient, and continuing instant are concepts that point to the future, to the goal of our life, whither we are on the way. In 1 Peter 1:3 it stands that God has begotten us again unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. There we are on the way to. That is our hope. In Titus 2 it stands that we should live soberly in this present evil world, looking for that blessed hope, namely the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour. Our hope is that glory. In yet another place it is said that we were predestinated unto the adoption of children (Ephesians 1:5. That is our hope. The placing as sons means that we shall receive an inheritance. That is our reward. We shall be glorified with Christ. That is that inheritance and that is that reward. For clarity, our hope is not that we shall one day go to heaven, for we are already set in heaven. That can therefore never be our hope, for something you already have, you do not hope for. That glory is the result of a life that was serviceable to the Lord, a life in which we did what we did as unto the Lord. For that we shall receive reward. Our hope is that we shall also receive a full reward. That this is said here is directly connected with the preceding verses, for the more we have devoted our life to the Lord here, the stronger that hope. Thereby we rejoice. We do not rejoice so much in the present, but in our future. That is determinative for our present. We do not rejoice in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, but in the hope of the inheritance laid up for us in heaven. They are but short sentences, but they therefore have a very strong charge.
Because of that hope we are patient in tribulation. For that passes, implying that the life of a believer is at any rate not without tribulation. It suggests at least that our whole life as believers is characterised by tribulation. That seems negative, but in practice this also applies to the life of the unregenerate man. Life is full of tribulation, full of headwind. We have reason to be patient and to rejoice, because this will be recompensed. Where we serve the Lord and suffer tribulation, there we shall receive reward for it. That is reason for joy. It even stands that we should count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations (James 1:2. The epistle to the Philippians, which is entirely devoted to our life on earth, though we have a citizenship in heaven, says that we should

rejoice in the Lord, for it concerns after all one thing, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14. As a certainty. God has promised us something and therefore, be patient in tribulation.
Continuing instant in prayer.
In general we understand by prayer speaking to God. It is not that we should not do that, but the work that God does in us does not come about because we speak to Him, but the other way round, because He speaks to us. That comes about because we listen to Him. If you always just talk to the Lord, that is probably not so wise. If someone can teach you something, then you should keep your mouth shut and listen. And if Someone can teach you something, then it is God Himself. He speaks to us. Perhaps Bible study is even more important than prayer, because we then let the Lord speak to us. We benefit from that. Or does the Lord benefit from our talking to Him? Or was that not the intention? Probably that is also that you yourself benefit from it.
A prayer in the Bible does not merely mean that one speaks to God, but that one serves Him. It is not the intention that we only offer the fruit of our lips to Him, but also the fruit of our hands and feet, of our whole body, which we have presented a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.
Of course it is also so that we by Christ always offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15. We should indeed do that, but Romans 12:1 says that it is not only about the lips, but about the whole body. It does not concern that we now and then offer Him something in words, but that everything we do we do heartily unto the Lord.
Prayer in the narrow sense of the word and according to etymology does indeed mean that one speaks, but in the Bible prayer receives the meaning that we should place our whole life and not only the lips, the throat, the tongue and the mouth at His disposal. Prayer is the designation of our whole service to God. That is why it stands that we should continue instant in prayer and that we should pray without ceasing. That is why it also stands that we should pray in all places, lifting up holy hands (1 Timothy 2:8. The Lord said: “Let your words be few.” God does not need those words. The Gentiles think that and use many words, because they think that their god can be manipulated by that. Let your words be few and especially not demonstrative. Go into your inner chamber. Why then in all places and without ceasing? Because it concerns our whole walk of life. Prayer is the expression of subjection and thereby of serviceability. When we worship God that is the expression that we submit to Him. When we go to God in a petitionary prayer, that is just as much the expression that we submit to God and regard Him as the Greater. And if that is so, if we submit to Him and regard Him as our superior, then we should therefore serve Him and therefore that is also simply called praying. Characteristic of the believer is that he prays, but characteristic of the believer is also that he serves the Lord. That is called prayer.

Romans 12:13
Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.
The same idea is repeated here several times, though expressed in different terms. Serving the Lord finds expression in every possible way, and these various ways are named. The core remains that we live in submission to the Lord. We serve Him and we love Him. We simply choose that. The next verse belongs to this as well.

The saints are the believers. Distribute therefore to the needs of the brothers and sisters. What needs? All needs, for it is not specified. And do not forget beneficence and liberality; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Hebrews 13:16. That is therefore a good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. One should give not only to God but also to one another. In practice there is not even any difference between the two, for you may indeed offer something to God, but literally speaking He does not take it. We should serve the Lord by serving one another, because we are children of God and therefore brothers and sisters. We should provide whatever is necessary among the believers, if it is possible. And therefore we should be liberal—that is, beneficent toward our brothers and sisters. We should supply one another with what is needed.
Fellowship is not about chatting one another to death, but about supplying one another with what is necessary.
Be given to hospitality. If it is needed, give one another lodging. Literally, but not exclusively literally. That is connected with the needs of the saints. A person needs a roof over his head, clothing, and possibly food. That is exactly what one might receive in a lodging place and what we might give to one another.
An overseer must also be given to hospitality. One should open one's home and one's life to others. If you apply that literally in the Netherlands, then we have a major problem, for the ideal of equality for all has led to houses being made as small as possible, because the lowest has been raised to the norm. If you have two children, the house is truly full.
In any case, we should open our lives—and possibly our homes—to one another. That is the principle. That is not the last word on the matter, but one should at least strive toward it.
The Lord receives us into His house. Once when the Lord Jesus was walking in the street, two men followed Him and asked Him: "Lord, where dwellest thou?" Then He said: "Come and see," and He received them into His house. Later we also encounter a house where the entrance is barricaded by religious people, by Pharisees.
However that may be, the Lord receives us into His house, into His temple, into His church, and therefore we should receive one another and be open to one another.

Romans 12:14
Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.
They may indeed be your brothers, but they are your enemies—speaking of a certain category. Nevertheless it stands: "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."

Romans 12:15
Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
We should sympathise with one another. There are recalcitrant children of God, there are those who are slow to learn, there are those who are just starting on the way and still have a great deal to learn. We should bear with one another and trust that the Lord has not only begun a good work in ourselves but in all believers, and that He will complete that work. Some think that ecclesiastical discipline must be introduced, but that is nowhere found in the whole Bible. Insofar as there is discipline, the Bible says that our heavenly Father chastens us. Ecclesiastical discipline is exercised by the Head of the

church. That is Christ and not us. We should at most be an example to one another. We should therefore conduct ourselves accordingly.
Peter says that it may well be that you suffer wrong, but why make a fuss? The Lord will do right. Have patience; it will all come right.

Romans 12:16
Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.
In the first half of this verse you also recognise verses 13–15.
Be of the same mind one toward another. That term has been especially misused since the invention of ecumenism. That we as different denominations should above all come together and tolerate one another. The Bible, however, knows no denominations and therefore does not say that they should come together. The Bible says that we should be of the same mind. That is true, but not regardless of what mind.
Of the same mind = one in mind, one in disposition, one in intention, with the same intentions. We do not have a choice as to what disposition that should be, toward which we strive. But that is only described in Romans 15:5
Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:
We have a passionate God. He does His work with full commitment. But He is also a patient God. He consoles. His desire is that we be likeminded one toward another, and it specifies what likemindedness that is—according to Christ Jesus. He would be our mind, in the sense that we should be directed toward Him. It would be our intention to serve Him. What binds us as believers to one another is not consensus, but commitment. What binds us to one another is not our agreement, but devotion. We think differently about different things, but our fellowship does not lie in thinking the same about everything, but in serving the same Lord. For we have presented our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. That we have in common. We have one common Lord and Master. We have one common Head. We serve Him, in different ways. But if everything is right, then our ministries complement one another. That is being likeminded.
Romans 15:6
That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
That we may with one accord, with one mouth…Of course it also very much concerns hands and feet. The mouth is mentioned, but all body parts are understood under it, the mouth being regarded as the most important part of man. If only because he needs it to stay alive. He breathes through it to stay alive, he eats through it to stay alive, but something also comes out again; he also speaks. You know, man is not defiled by what enters the mouth, but by what comes out of the mouth. By what he speaks. But then by everything he does. The mouth as the most important body part is used to designate the whole. That is so throughout the whole Bible.
That we therefore with one accord, with our whole life, may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the purpose of our life—that it should be to the glory of God. Therefore and to that end we serve Him.
Back to Romans 12:16.

Be of the same mind one toward another therefore means that each for himself, but thereby together, has devoted his life to the service of the Lord. Everything we do, whatever it is in our life, we should do heartily unto God and not unto men. We may not have the same consensus, but we do have the same devotion.
Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.
That is a further elaboration of verse 3. For one should be wise to sobriety. Do not rise above that. In many circles, including within Christianity, we are taught that we should strive for high things. In some circles it is said that you must be a good steward, in others that you must be positive, or that you must be strong-willed, set your ideals high, and so on. You must get out of life what is in it. If there is anything to undermine your health, it is striving for high things. Then you automatically pass yourself by. Just take it a bit easier. Man likes to strive for higher things, but in reality that is fed by his pride. An appeal is in fact made to that. Just try it. Where there's a will, there's a way. That is called positivism. There is a core of truth in it, but it is not the truth. The truth is: mind not high things. One should do as well as possible what one has and what one can. The normal result of that is that one automatically rises somewhat higher. Not because one strives for it. The danger of rising higher is that you cannot bear the responsibility. You become overstretched by that. The tragedy of man is that he thinks he must make a career, and along the way he collapses under the pressure. Then he has to go back to square one, and life has become one great disappointment. For some that is reason enough to put an end to it. Don't do it! Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate; be not wise in your own conceits.
This confirms that we are actually back at verse 3, at its elaboration. Be modest. The Lord said to His table companions that when you come somewhere to eat, you do not sit at the front. You only run the risk of being put back and therefore humiliated, because those places were intended for others. You had better sit somewhere at the back, and if the master of the house, or the one in charge of the seating, thinks it necessary for you to sit further forward, he will say: "Friend, go up higher." That is more honourable than being put back. So it is also in society, and certainly among believers. Striving for higher things oneself has not the least sense; it inevitably ends in humiliation.

Romans 12:17
Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
Rendering evil for evil is the law. That is perfectly just by earthly standards, but we do not live under the law. For those who think we do live under the law, then it is eye for eye, tooth for tooth. What do those people do with Romans 12:17? No idea. We are delivered from the law and live under the reign of grace. We therefore do not render evil for evil; we render nothing at all, in the sense of taking revenge or anything like it. For we live from the grace that God gives us. We have already lost all our rights. One died for all, and therefore we too have died, as to the old man. What rights? Dead people have no rights. Insofar as we live—well, life is Christ for us, and He will bring forth righteousness. We live from that. Nothing can happen to us. It will all come right. Right according to God's standards and not ours.
Provide things honest in the sight of all men. We should take no notice of all the circumstances and injustices in the world. We should not worry about them. We need

not pass judgement on them, for the Lord will do that. We have been withdrawn from that world of sin and law and death. We are delivered from it. We step out of that world.

Romans 12:18
If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
We immediately sense that it is not possible, because it does not lie in us. But if it is at all possible, we keep peace with all men. Whether all men want peace with us is not our responsibility. We have peace with God and therefore also with one another. That places us independently of any circumstance whatever. Whatever happens, we serve the Lord Christ. What others do is their responsibility.
We rejoice in hope, we live soberly, we mind not high things, we serve the Lord. As for the devil, another apostle said that you should resist him. He also says how you should do that—namely by submitting yourselves to God. It is tragic that so many believers think they must fight against the devil and his work. That is a misunderstanding. We should serve the Lord. That is how we resist the devil. Then at any rate he has no power over us. In that we find one another, and in that we should be likeminded.

Romans 12:19
Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
That is the elaboration of verse 17. Recompense to no man evil for evil.
The Lord delivers us with these words from a heavy task. We need not avenge ourselves and need not seek our own right. The Lord would do that. Perhaps later than we hope, but however that may be, the Lord would do it. And where we serve the Lord, we shall receive right from Him and He will reward us for it. That surely seems a liberating thought. It takes a great deal of responsibility away from us. We do have an adversary in this world, but we have nothing to fight here, for we serve the Lord. That is a positive matter. Fighting the enemy is by definition a negative matter. We are conscious, regardless of circumstances, that we are His property and that He would do a work in us. He will give us strength in that. He will supply us with what is necessary, and from the grace He gives us, we also give grace to one another. As He forgives us, we forgive one another. Insofar as injustice occurs—even in our lives—well, He would do right. We look forward to that and therefore rejoice in hope.
We should not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. With this the vicious circle is broken, which usually goes from bad to worse. Others treat us badly and we think we should therefore treat others badly too, for they have deserved it. We however should take no notice of evil, but provide things honest in the sight of all men. As much as lies in us we should live peaceably with all men. For we live under the New Covenant of peace. Christ is our peace, so that peace should be characteristic of our position in life. There is no place for our avenging ourselves or seeking our own right. That is of the highest importance. Insofar as there is a climax in this Scripture section, it undoubtedly lies in this verse.
Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved, but rather give place unto wrath. There is Someone else who will secure our right. He does that, however, only in the future. Fortunately we live from a blessed hope for the future, and we know that Christ is not only our peace, but has also become righteousness of God for us. He will bring forth righteousness at the end. It therefore concerns that we seek no right of our own. For

that is what everyone does. You could say: “That is also what the Gentiles do.” We however should not do that. Not that right will not be brought forth, but not by us and certainly not in this present time and certainly not in this present dispensation, which is characterised by grace. That is not a grace under which only we live, but under which the whole world actually finds itself. The Lord is longsuffering, not only toward us as believers, but toward the whole world. We know that people are always looking for acts and vengeance of God in the world, but the Bible says that God does not do that. God has let the world go for a while, and in that time man treasures up wrath for himself through the hardness and impenitent heart, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. One thing and another piles up, but for the time being nothing is done about it. That only comes at the coming again of Christ, and as far as we are concerned it only comes at our appearing before the judgment seat of Christ. To Him belongs vengeance. There is only one supreme Judge, and we trust in Him.
And if the mind of Christ is in us, then we have the time and patience to leave these things to the Lord in the future.

Romans 12:20
Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
If you treat your enemy in this way, he will not know what to do with such treatment. He will undoubtedly have expected the opposite.
The thought behind this expression is that if someone really got glowing coals on his head, he would immediately shake them off his head. Undeserved praise or kindness should work in the same way. The one who is treated so kindly without deserving it should feel so guilty that he admits he was wrong, in order to reduce his guilt.

Romans 12:21
Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
It is for us to break through those relatively normal things in the world. We do not belong to the world and therefore do it differently. We conform to the present attitude and position of Christ toward the world, to whom is given all power in heaven and on earth and to whom the judgment is given. He does nothing about it and therefore neither do we. That delivers us from a great deal of misery.
The only way evil can be overcome is by doing good.

Romans 13

Submission to Governing Authorities
In the verses above it is clear, at any rate, that Christ should reign in our lives and that the mind of Christ should be our mind. That we have but one Lord and Master, whom we follow, whom we should take as our example—indeed, whose life should be lived in us. We are no longer led by law, sin, or death, but by the Holy Spirit. He leads us toward our adoption as sons in the future.
This might lead to the thought that we, who have received a heavenly citizenship and stand under a different authority, have nothing more to do with human government. That is not such a strange conclusion. In general it holds that we have a heavenly citizenship, that our manner of life is in heaven, that we have a heavenly position and a heavenly

inheritance. Moreover, the Lord Jesus Himself said that we as believers have been given to Him and therefore, like Him, do not belong to the world. Yet we still have to do with this world, and the following section concerns that. It does not, however, go any further than what is stated in this passage.

Romans 13:1
Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
The words of this section have often been abused, probably because people have other interests. They are frequently misunderstood. You must read carefully what is written, but that of course applies to the whole of Scripture.
In this chapter Paul does not suddenly address the world, and therefore not unbelieving people either, for to them he has no other message than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This section too is addressed to believers.
We are therefore told that every soul should be subject to the authorities appointed by God. That is human government.
Every soul = in modern language it should have been every soul. In older scripts the distinction is made only in singular or plural. Every soul is definite, and all souls indefinite; otherwise it would have said all souls. With all souls you do not know how many are meant, but with every soul you do. It is the same as in Ephesians 3, where it says we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. That is wrong in modern English. It should have said all blessings or every blessing. With every blessing you can count them; otherwise you do not know what it all contains.
With “every soul” each soul is addressed individually. It therefore concerns each one of us.
Soul = person, the visible person, the outward person, the person who can be filmed. The soul is the walk, what one does. Even when it concerns a dead body, it is still called a soul in the Bible. It is then translated “dead soul,” but the word “dead” is not even there. That is clear from the context. The inward man is called spirit. There is a soulish man and there is a spiritual man.
If therefore it says every soul should be subject, this means that every walk is subject. It does not say that every spirit is subject to the authorities. According to the Bible human government has nothing to say about what we think. Thoughts are duty-free.
Government may have nothing to say about what a person thinks. Nowadays we have the idea that we may think what we like, but we also have the idea that we may say what we like—freedom of speech. But if you do both, you get into serious trouble. In reality we do not have that freedom in the Netherlands either. Perhaps that is just as well.
According to the Bible we may at any rate think what we like. Government has nothing to say about it. Anne van der Bijl once said that government’s function is to regulate traffic. That is more or less where it ends, however wide-ranging that may be. Government has something to say about our behaviour. That is necessary. We live with too many people in too small a space. We know it causes problems among animals, and we know it causes problems among people, but we are not allowed to say so, for that is politically incorrect. So much for freedom of speech in this country.
In our practical life we are, according to God’s will, indeed subject to government. That is rule number one, but as with all rules there are exceptions—though they are not stated in this chapter. Well, they are there, but they are contained in the term “subject.”

The most striking thing is that it does not say every soul should obey the authorities set over her. In other Scripture passages dealing with this subject it does not say that either. It says subject, corresponding to submissive. That we do not understand this expression we probably owe to so-called democracy, which we have almost raised to the level of religion. In former times people went out to preach the gospel, but nowadays they go out to establish democracy. That is exactly the opposite, for when one preaches the gospel one preaches the authority of the Most High, and democracy is the authority of the very lowest. The idea that power should be given to the people is surely a rather disastrous delusion, for what would the people then rule over? The people would then decide who the government is and what the government should do. The Bible, however, teaches that government decides what the people should do and not do. If therefore you reproach our government for not doing well, they do not even get the chance, for this is a democracy. The power of the so-called government is very limited by elections every few years. The idea that we should be submissive we have systematically abolished since the Second World War. We have rejected all authority, abolished the nobility, abolished all titles; it has all become thou and thee. Ministers no longer look so excellent as they once did.

The biblical idea presented here is taken from Genesis 9, where the second dispensation begins, that of the nations. God officially divided mankind into nations a few thousand years ago. That was not so before, for before the whole earth was of one language and one speech, and the idea of man was that he should not be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth and that mankind should be united under one leader and one government. That government would then have its residence in the city of Babel. In the future something similar will yet be established, namely the great empire of the Antichrist, in which the world will be united under one government, with Babel as capital.

In Genesis 10 we find an enumeration of those nations. In chapter 11 we find how it came about, and in chapter 9 we find that this principle is announced immediately after Noah's flood and is summarised in one verse.

Genesis 9:6

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

With emphasis on the words usually skipped when quoting. Not that his blood shall be shed as by some kind of natural law, but by man shall his blood be shed. Here man is appointed to have dominion over man, and therefore it is the institution of human government. From of old government also administers justice. Nowadays these things have been separated, and beside government there is the judiciary.

God would administer justice, but man would also administer justice. This of course also has prophetic meaning and applies to Christ. He after all is that Man who would execute vengeance. This does not alter the fact that it first has a horizontal application. We therefore find here the division of nations, whereby nations have their own language and also their own land. God divided mankind into nations. Nations have their own national character because they are family and originally descend from the same parents. And because they have their own familial ideas, it is also wise that they live somewhat separated from nations with a different national character, for they would come into conflict with one another. That this is so is confirmed by the situation we know in the world today. All sorts of nations are mixed together. Many nations also live

divided across different countries, where the borders of the different countries are not the same as the borders of the different nations. The Kurds should live in Kurdistan, but in practice they live in Turkey, Armenia, Iraq, and Iran. That area therefore stretches across several countries and therefore causes problems in those countries. The biblical idea is that every nation has its own land, but nowadays people want to unite everything again in one empire, with one world government. Up to now not much has come of that, but in the future it will yet happen. God separated mankind and brought division. Thus nations received a separate position. People were divided according to their families, according to their language, in their lands, and according to their nations.
This therefore is the institution of what we call human government. That is why we also call this dispensation the dispensation of human rule. By the time the world under the leadership of the Antichrist has again made one "people" of it, God will intervene again. Then the Lord will descend and destroy Babel. In our days, however, this dispensation of human rule still exists, and the idea remains that there is no power but of God. He Himself instituted that government as an institution, and we as believers are not withdrawn from it. We should rather acknowledge that government as God's minister. Does God then determine the outcome of elections? We all know that is not the case, for God is not democratic. Secondly, God has let the world go and therefore does not interfere with it. But the institution of government is willed by God. What we tinker with it and how we tamper with it is our responsibility and will have consequences.
For there is no power but of God.
Power = exousia. That word carries with it that it is a subordinate power instituted from above. It is a power that proceeds from elsewhere. Exousia comes from the word exesti = to be permitted. It is a power instituted and permitted from higher authority and therefore lawful. So it stands, for there is no power but of God.
We, Alexander, king of the Netherlands, by the grace of God. By the grace of God. This expresses that the king received his power from the grace of God, but it also means that that power does not come from the people but from God. To what extent this is so in practice has nothing to do with it here. It concerns the principle. And even if one is appointed king over that people by the people, yet according to biblical standards one does not stand in the service of the people but of God, because it is a divine institution.
For the powers that be are ordained of God. It is an institution of God. Hierarchy is a divine principle.
That we as believers should be submissive—indeed subject—to the authorities also stands in other Scripture passages.
In the last verses of Titus 2 what the present work of the church is is stated, but then in the next verse it concerns our position toward the authorities here on earth.
Titus 3:1
Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,
Subject and therefore submissive.
That they obey magistrates. That is not there, for magistrates is in italics. We should not obey the principalities and powers, but be subject to them. We should obey Christ. That is also clear from the continuation of the sentence, namely that they be ready to every good work. Not on the orders of government, but on the orders of Christ, who makes us able for every good work.

To be subject means that one takes one's position, but this does not mean that one obeys human government under all circumstances, for one must obey God rather than men. There are areas in our life in which we obey God rather than human government. The point is that nowhere in the Bible does it say that we should obey government. Subjection implies obedience, but only to a certain level.

1 Peter 2:11–14

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Soul from verse 11 is replaced in verse 12 by conversation (walk).Governors = deputies, standing in the place of the king. They represent the king.

Here too it is not obey government but be subject.

1 Timothy 2:1–2

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Human government is therefore expected to be responsible for a quiet and peaceable life for its subjects. As long as they leave us alone everything is well. Whatever kind of government it is makes no difference, as long as they leave us Christians alone. They are expected to ensure that peace.

We should therefore pray for the authorities, not that things may go well with our country, but that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. They are expected to be in authority and therefore we are indeed subject to them. In Acts 4 we find a practical example where Peter and John as representatives of the apostles appear before the Jewish government. They are brought before the Sanhedrin, who were of the opinion that the apostles should no longer speak in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:19–20

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

They are subject, but in this case they cannot comply with what is demanded of them. What they do not say is that they cannot but speak because they have received the great commission. We must speak because of the commission. They say they cannot but speak of what they have seen and heard. From that you can also conclude that the statement in Acts 1—that the apostles would be His witnesses—is not a commission but the statement of a fact. They could not but speak of what they had seen and heard. That cannot be stopped by government, because it comes from within. That is the effect of Christ in us. We are subject to government, but there are areas in which we do not obey government. That is not from lack of respect, but simply because the power within us is stronger than the power of government.

Back to Romans 13.

Romans 13:1
Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Romans 13:2
Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Romans 13:3
For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:
Insofar as we keep to the institutions of our human government, we shall receive praise from that government. That gives us freedom and a quiet and peaceable life.

Romans 13:4
For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.
Government proves to be God's minister—feminine—while government in general is a masculine concept because of dominion. The biblical thought is that government does not primarily stand in the service of the people, for then government would be a masculine concept. Government stands in the service of the One above government—namely in the service of God Himself—and is therefore subordinate to God and therefore feminine. Government stands feminine toward God and masculine toward the people over whom it is appointed. Such a structure we also find in the church. Paul says he is a servant of Christ, but a minister of the church. A servant is a slave and the designation of the position in which someone stands; a minister indicates the work he does. In the service of God Paul is responsible to do all that is necessary for the church. Not on the orders of the church, but on the orders of God. Those are hierarchical concepts we have unfortunately lost in our society. Government must serve the people, but it does so in the service of God. Insofar as human government must give account for its actions, it is not to the people but to God. The same applies to Paul. Insofar as he must give account, it is not to the church but to Christ, whose servant he has become. We as human beings have a place in that hierarchy.
The Hebrew concept king is the same as the concept messenger, in the sense of a servant.
King = melech;
Messenger = malach, also translated angel.
It is the same word, for in Hebrew the vowels are not written. A king is by definition a messenger of God. That is why God appoints kings. Whether He also chooses them is a rather more difficult matter, but the basic principle says enough. God gives the kingdoms of the earth to whom He will and appoints over them the basest of men (= Christ). Government is God's minister, for thy good. But if you do evil, fear; for he bears not the sword in vain. Government is responsible for maintaining order. The problem is that we no longer acknowledge authority. We have become anti-authoritarian. Why do

things go so badly in the Netherlands? Because disorder reigns, because authority is not acknowledged.

Romans 13:5
Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.
If in practice we are not subject to government, that brings a burden upon our conscience. Then we must fear government and live in a kind of tension. Then we must always look over our shoulder to see if they are not after us. If you submit to government, then you need not fear that government either. If government itself misbehaves, that is not our responsibility.

Romans 13:6
For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.
The Bible says you pay tribute only to superiors. Abraham paid his tithes to Melchisedec, from which the conclusion is drawn that he was subordinate to Melchisedec.
Since Abraham was the grandfather of Levi and therefore an ancestor of Aaron, and they received tithes from the people, Abraham stood above them. But he therefore stood under Melchisedec, from which it is concluded that the High Priest of the New Covenant was higher than the high priest of the Old Covenant.
We pay tribute to government and that means we are subordinate to them. Of course we have a heavenly citizenship, but that is comparing apples and pears. As to the new man we are heavenly citizens, but as to the old man we are indeed subject to all those institutions of earthly government. This sometimes causes tension and then we should obey God rather than men. Insofar as government according to our idea takes far too much tax, that is government's responsibility. This means that the members of that government must one day give account before the supreme Judge, after which you immediately wonder whether a Christian is suitable for a political office.

Romans 13:7
Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.
It will be clear that these concepts, however different they may be, function as synonyms. One honours someone by giving him something. To honour someone literally means to give someone honour. In practice it means to pay someone. Then he receives an honorarium. When the Bible says "Honour your rulers," it simply means you are expected to honour them. That you should honour widows also stands in the Bible, but widows have nothing to do with honour. They must be paid. That is the same thing. Tribute, custom, fear, honour.
In Romans 12:1 the practical part of the epistle begins, in which it is said that we should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. That is where our Christian life begins. That should result in our being taught by the Word, so that our thinking is changed, so that we learn to understand what position we hold in the church and what responsibility we have received from the grace of God, after which we exclaim: "Who am I that I may do this?" We should rejoice in the gift, in the responsibility God has given us.

After that we ask ourselves how it is in general with the Christian life. What does it look like? Well, that we should not be overcome by the evil amid which we live. How then not? That is described in those short sentences.

Our Position in the World

The following verses address our position in the world, stating that we are to be subject to the governing authorities. We have not become anarchists or freebooters; on the contrary, precisely as Christians we should be good citizens. Good citizens do not interfere with government but are submissive to it. This has nothing to do with political opinions or the like; it simply means that as citizens we are subject to the authorities. If everyone did so, government would not have so many problems, and we as a people would not be so entangled in all those issues about which everyone feels compelled to have an opinion. That is what those people in The Hague are there for. But when the people themselves are disobedient and do not maintain that subjection, then we have a problem. Chaos ensues.

We are not responsible for the country, but for our own lives. As believers we should first take our position and from there live. Not the other way round. We should not live in order to attain a certain position, but we should first know our position and walk from there. You do not need to tell that to Willem-Alexander. He was born into a certain position and has tried to walk accordingly. We too are nobly born and should therefore walk worthy of the calling with which we are called. We should know our position in that regard—before God (chapter 12), but also in this world (chapter 13). In it we should walk soberly and righteously in this present evil age. That means we should first get our own lives in order, so as to have peace in our lives and from there be able to serve the Lord. If that foundation is not sound, little will come in practice of serving the Lord. Imagine being a politician and having to bear the cares of the whole country. The question is what Christian life you could then still manifest. As a politician you must constantly conceal the truth. That is then called for the sake of the greater good. Perhaps it is necessary, but it seems rather problematic. As children of God we should rather pursue the truth. You would think that would immediately make one unfit for such a position. May one then make no compromises? Yes, the Bible knows of that too, but it makes life more complicated. The simpler your life, the better. The fewer cares, the better. If you want no cares and no burdened conscience, be subject to the authorities. From there we live and serve the Lord. So first get your life in order and from there serve the Lord—not the other way round. Serving the Lord does not mean that earthly life will automatically go well. That is not so. First know your position and actually take it. That makes a person able to walk acceptably to God. Moreover, since we are delivered from this world and everything in it, and also from the evil one who rules the world, it is not the intention that we should be actively involved in the affairs of the world, for then we would constantly run into that evil one. The intention is rather that we should leave it as much as possible for what it is and walk acceptably to God. Otherwise we remain entangled in the cares of this age. Those are thorns and thistles. Perhaps you can try to find your way through them, but it would be far easier simply to step out of them.

If government does not do well, then either God will intervene or call it to account. And if He does not do so, then so be it.

Exhortation to Love of Neighbour

Romans 13:8
Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
With this statement we are back to Romans 12:9–10: “Let love be without dissimulation… Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.” That is the debt and therefore the responsibility we have as believers.

Romans 13:9
For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
He mentions only a few.
The summary = the outcome of a calculation, especially of an addition.
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Even among convinced atheists this idea has taken root, while in Christendom it has wrongly been taught that we must live under the law; and because people sense that this is in practice impossible, the law has been reduced to just one commandment. The whole law can then be added up, and the result is that you must love your neighbour. Should that still prove too difficult, a committee can always open a debate on the question of who our neighbours are. That has meanwhile been reasoned away as far as possible, so that neighbour now chiefly means distant neighbour. But a distant neighbour is much like dry water. If someone is your neighbour, he is not distant; otherwise he is your furthest. A distant neighbour is an oxymoron—a figure of speech in which two contradictory concepts are combined into one. The word derives from Greek oxys (sharp) and moros (dull) and means something like foolish nonsense.
Paul therefore says that however you look at the law, it always comes down to loving your neighbour as yourself. The law was given to Israel and to no one else. If anyone else wished to live under that law, it could only be by joining Israel. He then became a stranger within the gates of Israel. That means that for all practical purposes he was reckoned as an Israelite. The law functioned as social legislation applicable to all living in the land of Canaan. That still holds. The Jews know this very well, for when they are not within the borders of the promised land, they also consider themselves not bound to keep the law. That immediately determines who those are whom we should love.
He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
This commandment is placed alongside another in quite a few Scripture passages, namely: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all that is in thee. Linked to that is then the commandment to love thy neighbour as thyself. On occasion it is added that there is no difference between these two commandments. The commandment “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God” is the first of the ten commandments. The question is who the Lord thy God is whom we should love. That is the Lord (Jehovah), the God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. We should therefore love the God who has accomplished redemption.
The other commandment, to love thy neighbour as thyself, is not in the ten commandments. You only find that commandment in Leviticus 19. Above that chapter

stands: domestic and civil laws. Also in this chapter it often says: I am the Lord, so there can be no doubt who gives these laws.
Leviticus 19:16
Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour; I am the LORD.
Among thy people = among thy multitudes = among the tribes of Israel.
Neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour = a fine illustration that you cannot fill in “death” for “blood,” for of course it does not say thou shalt not stand against the death of thy neighbour. Thou shalt not stand against the life of thy neighbour. If you lose your life or blood, then you are indeed dead.
If you were already to ask here who that neighbour is, it immediately says afterwards: I am the LORD. If we take it as literally as possible, then neighbour means the nearest. Moreover it is only one, for it is singular: neighbour, not neighbours. You may find that far-fetched, but the promises to Abraham were made to Abraham and his seed. In Galatians 3 Paul says of that that it does not say “to Abraham and his seeds, as of many,” but “to Abraham and his seed, as of one, which is Christ.” In Genesis you would never have thought of that, but Paul explains it as though it concerns a singular. So also with the commandment to love thy neighbour as thyself, which is Christ. Now you can indeed say that when reading Leviticus you would never have thought of Christ as your neighbour. You could moreover have known it by reading the parable of the good Samaritan. There it appears that the neighbour is the one who showed mercy. Our neighbour is the one who shows or has shown us mercy. That is Christ. Whom therefore should we love? Christ. Now we follow the line in Leviticus again.
Leviticus 19:17
Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and shalt not suffer sin upon him.
If you are at all familiar with the language of the Bible, it will be clear that the brother in the first clause is the same as the neighbour in the second.
Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart implies that thou shalt love him. Love should be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, with the love of brethren. That is love of neighbour.
We should also love our enemies, but they are not our neighbours and that is not what we are speaking of now. That stands elsewhere. We love one another because we are brethren. Lie not one to another, seeing that we are members one of another. That concerns the situation within the church. That penetrates with difficulty because people have given the church a place in the world, as part of society and belonging to society. The church is rather placed outside the world, outside society, outside the camp. The instructions we receive are primarily instructions for our mutual relationships. Our citizenship is in heaven and therefore these things apply within the church. In that church we should owe no man any thing but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. You are expected to understand that this call to love of neighbour is not so that we should fulfil the law. That the law is thereby fulfilled is true, but that is not the intention. For we do not live under the law. We should love one another from the heart, because this is the fruit of the Spirit of Christ who works in us. He does not work in us to fulfil the law, for the Lord Jesus fulfilled that in His suffering and death to deliver us from the law, that we might serve one another in love through liberty (Galatians 5). We are placed in liberty, but it is not the intention that we

should use that liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but that we should serve one another by love. There are also things expected of us without their being required by the law. The law has nothing to do with that. You can also do things that are not prescribed and you can also refrain from things that are not forbidden, simply of free will. In that position we as children of God are placed. In that position we should serve one another by love. That is in a position of humility.
For those who nevertheless have the tendency to hold to the law it is rather amusing, for by loving Christ and the brethren the law is fulfilled. That is the essence of God's will. This is what He expects of man in general. God does not ask man not to sin, for that is striving against sin, but He asks man to serve God. He does that by bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit. The law requires that man love his neighbour, but then it did not happen. Men rejected the Lord and His word. Now man is delivered from the law. The law therefore no longer says that thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour. It still stands there, but the law is no longer in force. Now we are delivered from the law and suddenly spontaneously as fruit of the Spirit love the Lord and our brethren. That is what the word of Christ, planted in our soft heart, accomplishes. That is rather amusing. Now that it is no longer required, it is done. Now that we are placed in liberty and all things are lawful to us, we spontaneously love Him who placed us in that liberty.
Now follows an explanation.

Romans 13:10
Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
Love has to do with fellowship. Love establishes unity. Love is the power that seeks to bring unity. Love makes one and thereby also makes life, for love is fellowship and fellowship is life.
Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. When there is fellowship with the neighbour, one does the neighbour no ill. Thereby love is the fulfilling of the law. The law prescribes how one should love. That is difficult, for love cannot be prescribed. Love cannot be summoned. That does not happen on command.
"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour" could be supplemented with the expressions from
1 Corinthians 13:4
Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
Love is longsuffering. In love goodness thrives. Love is not envious. That is remarkable, for envy, jealousy, is one of the driving forces in human affairs. That is what it is all about. For the voters, for the votes, for the ratings, for the struggle that goes with it. The world is full of jealousy. The devil invented it. He was second but wanted to be first. That is what the world runs on.
Love is not puffed up. Love does not make itself greater than it is. Love is modest, is serviceable.1 Corinthians 13:5
Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
Love behaves not unseemly. Love seeks not her own, but that of others. Love is not easily provoked and reckons no evil. If you love someone, you want to hear no evil word about him or her. If yet, you will not reckon it. Love makes blind.

1 Corinthians 13:6
Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
Love rejoices in sincerity. That is true love.
1 Corinthians 13:7–8
Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
Charity never faileth…
Here the ideal creation is set before us. God is love. In other words, here God is described. God is love, but that does not mean He does not also hate certain things. There are people who tend to exaggerate the love of God in the sense that this is the only thing that can be said about Him. If you want to know how love functions in practice, then you read 1 Corinthians 13.
Back again to Romans 13.
Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. When no ill is done, one no longer needs any law at all. The law gives precepts to prevent doing ill to one another and to promote doing good to one another, but when one does that naturally—because blood is thicker than water, because we are all family in Christ and have become partakers of the same life—there we are not under the law. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are not under the law, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and so on. Then one loves one another from the heart with brotherly love. There is no law.
Love is the fulfilling and thereby the completion of the law. There are quite a few statements about the love of God that is practically demonstrated, but they always relate to the end of the law. God, however, commendeth his love toward us in that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That resulted in our being delivered from the law. Where love comes, there the law disappears. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. The consequence is that the middle wall of partition is broken down and the handwriting that was against us is blotted out. All this means that we are no longer under the law.
Where it is claimed that there is so little love among the children of God and therefore in the church, people are probably not looking properly. But if it is true, then the question is how that comes about. Usually because people are inclined to hold to the law rather than to grace and the working of grace and the Spirit in believers.

Romans 13:11
And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
In the following verses the apostle says that we do not live under the law. On the contrary!
We know the time, the season of the time. Time itself is of little use to you. It concerns the season, the circumstances. In our days we no longer live under the darkness of the Old Covenant, no longer under the shadows of the Old Covenant, but in the light of the New. That is what he also says in the next verse. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.
We know in what kind of time we live—namely that it is now, after all those centuries of darkness, the time to awake—implying that this was also announced in the past. Here Isaiah 60:1 is paraphrased. That passage speaks of our time and therefore of New Testament time.

Isaiah 60:1
Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.
Arise = stand up.
Shine = stand in the light.
Instead of saying the sun rises, it says the glory of the LORD rises. The breaking of a new day is a picture of the breaking of the New Covenant, whereby darkness has passed and day breaks. It has become day, so stand up! Wake up; the sun is already up! Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. That is Isaiah 60:1, but then quoted in Ephesians 5:14.
That Isaiah 60:1 concerns this present time is evident from the explanation that follows in verse 2.
Isaiah 60:2
For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
While darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the peoples, here the reference is to people who nevertheless live in the light, because for them the sun has risen. They therefore arise and come to the light.
Christ is the light of the world, yet He would depart and leave the world in darkness. Because we have received Christ, however, we walk in the light.
Arise = stand up, but then standing up from the dead. So it stands in Ephesians 5:14:
Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
In Ephesians 2 and also in chapter 4 from verse 22 onwards it is taught that we have been raised with Christ, that we should put on the new man, and that we should therefore walk in the light.
Ephesians 5:8
For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.
We once belonged to the darkness. We were as it were absorbed in it. In Ephesians 2:1 it stands that we were dead in trespasses and sins. Darkness and death are the same, for darkness is associated with death, just as light is associated with life. When we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another. Thereby you see that light is life, for it is fellowship.
Ephesians 5:9
(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)In the original text it appears to read “light” rather than “Spirit.” It is an obvious scribal error, since Galatians 5:22 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit.
If we are children of light, then we walk in all goodness and righteousness and truth.
Ephesians 5:10
Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
See Romans 12:2:
And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
Ephesians 5:11
And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Ephesians 5:13
But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
Where we walk in the light, we learn to see how the world really is, because we then see the world as God sees it.
Ephesians 5:14
Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
In Isaiah 60:1 it stood that the glory of the LORD would rise upon us, and here that Christ will give light upon us. Now therefore you also know what the glory of the LORD is from the Old Testament—namely Christ. When Jehovah is glorified, it is because He has become the Christ. He is crowned with glory and honour.
Ephesians 5:15 - 18
See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
When it is once light, you can look ahead.
Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.That is possible because light makes manifest. Therefore we should know.
And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
One becomes drunk with wine at night. It is day and therefore light, and therefore instead of being drunk with wine we should be filled with the Holy Spirit.
This is the same line of thought as in Romans 13.
We know another Scripture passage in which the same thing is brought forward.
1 Thessalonians 5:5 -9
Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
For darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples, but upon you the light shall rise.
Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.
For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.
But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
That is putting on the new man. It concerns knowing the season of the time. In
1 Thessalonians 5:1 it says:
But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.
People always think this concerns the coming again of Christ. It does concern that among other things, but the first thing Paul says about it is that we live in that time, in that day of the New Covenant. That we now walk in the light. That in the future the day of the Lord comes is indeed true, but primarily it concerns that we live in the days of the New Covenant. Insofar as we have arisen and come to the light, we live under the glory of Christ and under the reign of grace and are firstfruits of a new creation.
Therefore, arise and come to the light.
Romans 13:11
And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
Meanwhile Isaiah 60 is being fulfilled.

We = we Israelites, we Jews in Old Testament times. Then salvation was promised and it was promised that the light would rise, but meanwhile the light has risen. The idea is not that salvation is now nearer to us than before, but that we now have a share in that salvation.
To draw near, to be near, or to come near therefore does not mean that it has come close, but that we already have a part in it. We were strangers from the commonwealth of Israel and were far off, but now we are made nigh. That does not mean we have come near to that commonwealth of Israel, but that we have a share in it. That salvation has therefore dawned and we have meanwhile received a part in it.

Romans 13:12
The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.
If the day has drawn near, then it has dawned. And because the day has dawned, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. What armour of light? The breastplate of righteousness and of love and the helmet of hope. In other words, put on Christ. In practice they are the works, or rather the fruits, of light and therefore of the Spirit.

Romans 13:13
Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying;
Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness;
Let us not walk in rioting and drunkenness…Rioting and drunkenness = twice the same thing;
Chambering and wantonness = also twice the same thing.
Strife and envying = also twice the same thing.
If man does not occupy himself with the first things, then he occupies himself with strife and envying. Let us cast off those things and instead…

Romans 13:14
But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.
It still concerns verse 12.
Cast off = lay aside clothing;
Put on = put on clothing.
It concerns articles of clothing. We know that terminology from other Scripture passages. See especially Ephesians 4, but also Colossians 3. That is the most extensive in these expressions. But now ye also put off all these (Colossians 3:8, as though it were a garment. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds - Colossians 3:9. That is the same as laying aside the old man. For we have died as to the old man and therefore we lay him aside.
And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him
Colossians 3:10; Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one

another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye - Colossians 3:12–13.
The nice thing is that it stands so casually. It simply says “put off.” It almost seems as though there is a good deal of typology in the behaviour of small children. They are dressed, and they themselves as quickly as possible get rid of the things you have just put on them.
It is therefore something simple. You simply throw it off. That can apparently be done. The only question is how you do it. Simply by walking in the light.
What is light? Everything that makes manifest—namely the word of God, in which we allow ourselves to be taught. If we allow ourselves to be taught in it, that will result in laying aside the old and putting on the new. That requires no effort, for it happens naturally. Where we are filled with the light of God’s word, with the life of Christ, there it will have an effect in our thinking.
Colossians 3:14
And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.
Here it is not stated, but the translators have filled it in, because it was already mentioned before.
Put on love, as though it were a garment. That love therefore has to do with our outward appearance and therefore with our behaviour, with our walk of life, with which we clothe ourselves. Not law, but grace is the basis of Christian ethics. What then is the mark of a Christian walk of life? It is love, just as enmity, strife, envy, and contention are characteristic of the life of the natural man. Just as one would lay aside the natural man, so one should put on the new man and above all these things love.
Love is the perfect bond. In the parallel passage in Ephesians 5 light is further defined, but here it is love, and love is the perfect bond. By making it a noun it receives the emphasis. The bond of perfectness = the perfect bond.
Love is therefore characteristic of the Christian walk of life. It concerns the unity of the church. Love brings about that unity. That is what this whole section of Romans 13 is about.
The section in Colossians 3 ends with: Put on love;
The section in Romans 13 ends with: Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
Where elsewhere it is said that we should put on the new man, here it is said that we should put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We should be clothed by Him and we should put on that garment. In other words, the responsibility for that lies with us. The work is admittedly not or hardly done by us, but the responsibility for it does lie with us. It was His responsibility and He did what had to be done. Now the responsibility lies with us—whether we accept what God offers us by grace. Therefore the responsibility for our salvation lies with us. That is the thrust of the whole biblical preaching. Accept what God gives. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But can you not hinder the work of God? Indeed you can. The work that God would do in your own life you can simply hinder. If for example you neglect Bible studies, or regard them as satisfying your intellectual needs. That is not the intention. The intention is that we also make it our own and then live from it. That we allow the words of God to be engraved, or planted, in our hearts.
Be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit desires to fill every believer. It does not say that the Spirit will do it, but that He desires to. The responsibility for that does indeed lie with yourself. It is not a command to pray for it, but it says: Be filled with the Spirit. This

implies that the Spirit would do it, but it also implies that if we do not desire it, it does not happen. Let yourself be filled with the Spirit. You decide.
Be reconciled to God. If you do not desire that, then not. You decide.
The responsibility lies with ourselves.

Romans 13:14
But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.
And make not provision for the flesh = namely make not provision for the flesh…If you want to put on the new man, then pay no attention to the old man. You would certainly not pamper or care for him. The flesh is to no profit. As long as one is directed toward the old man, one does not put on the new man. Unfortunately much Christian work is directed toward the old man. Thereby it stands in the way of the practical working of the gospel.
It is therefore a bit odd that you first care for people and then bring them the gospel. You should begin with that. If that has no effect, then the rest has no purpose either. Moreover those people do not belong to our family; they are not our neighbours and household of faith, so that we do not even come to that.
The main rule is the effect of the work of Christ in us. As to the flesh we have to some extent a position in the world. You must get that in order. Then you direct yourself to God's work in this present dispensation, the building up of the church. That is primarily the building up of your own Christian life and secondarily the building up of the spiritual life of your brothers and sisters, whom you learn to love. Thus we are involved in the work of Christ; thus we will love the brethren, our neighbours. That is characteristic of Christian, of spiritual life, of the life of Christ in us.

Romans 14:1
Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.
Him that is weak = the object. The one who is weak in the faith is not the subject of the sentence. The intention is namely that we should receive those who are weak in the faith. The sentence is therefore: receive him that is weak in the faith. That implies that we who receive those who are weak in the faith are expected to be strong. Hence also Romans 15:1:
We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
There is after all difference among believers. There is difference among people, and therefore there is also difference in the measure of someone's faith. As long as we believe that faith can be built up and strengthened, there is therefore also difference in the faith of one and another. That difference is here expressed as weak and strong
If you can be strengthened in the faith, then you can also be weak in the faith. It is a bit difficult for people who think they are strong in the faith to also have the weak among them. That is bad for their reputation, for what will the outside world think? Conversely there are weak in the faith who also prefer to remain weak, for the strong are troublesome critical people. The strong in the faith should adapt themselves to the weak. The weak have become the norm, also in society. People think for example that everyone should be able to receive education; therefore the standards have been lowered and the whole system adapted to the weak. After all, if you want to climb high

on the social ladder, then you had better lay that ladder flat for that purpose. In Christian circles you find exactly the same, for they always hobble a few years behind social developments. There too the weak is raised to the norm. Well, the strong is humbled.
Nevertheless, the strong are expected to bear the infirmities of the weak. We should bear with one another.
We should receive those who are weak in the faith.
Receive is far too weak a translation.
Receive = proslambano = take to oneself; draw to oneself.
It is therefore not merely tolerate. That is passive, whereas here it concerns an activity. We should draw the weak in the faith to ourselves and have compassion on them. That requires not only tolerance but also energy.
Apparently the combination of weak and strong in the faith automatically produces disputes. Those people of course never agree, but we should therefore not do that. It is not the intention that we should as quickly and as severely as possible correct the weak, or that we should actively train them so that they become stronger in the faith. Those things need time. The building up of faith is not a work of ours, but a work that the Lord Himself would do, by His word and by His Spirit. Our responsibility is that we should not reject those who are weak in the faith, but draw them to ourselves, however much trouble we may personally have with that—and vice versa.
What is being weak in the faith and what is being strong in the faith? That is illustrated in the following two verses by a few examples. They are generally rather trivial. They serve only as illustration. Nevertheless they are essential.

Romans 14:2
For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.
May one eat all things? Under the Old Testament religion of the law one might not eat all things. There were things unclean and those might certainly not be eaten. Think for example of pork. But even among atheists one thinks he may eat all things, while another thinks very differently about it. A great deal of well-meaning Christian literature offered to us nowadays contains nothing else than a great many counsels about what one may and may not do, either because it is forbidden or because people simply think it is bad for a person. Those books, however, do not have a long shelf life, for what is now bad for a person may in a few years suddenly prove good and vice versa. That constantly changes. Those insights must be scientifically justified, and science constantly changes.
May one now eat all things or not? Yes, for one who is weak in the faith eats herbs. We call that vegetables. Those who are weak are vegetarian. That is what it comes down to. The food laws of the Old Testament primarily concern what meat one may eat and what not. In New Testament times there is the Greek culture, where meat was regarded as the food. Food = meat. That is why meat was first sacrificed to idols. Then it was taken back from the idols and eaten oneself, with the idea that one then received the meat, the food, from the idols.
Both then and now there are believers who think that what has been sacrificed to idols may not be eaten. Rather odd, for the Bible also says that idols do not exist. Gods are also merely demons and we have nothing to do with them. We do not reckon them, we do not count them, and we do not know them, for the whole earth and the fulness

thereof is the Lord's. Nothing is unclean in itself (Romans 14:14. Only if you regard something as unclean, then it is unclean. If you think you may not eat something and yet you do, then you have trouble with your conscience. That has to do with your opinions, how you think about things. There is nothing unclean if it is received with thanksgiving. That is biblical. That truth, however, applies only to strong believers. We believe this because God says it. There are however also people who are weak in the faith and afraid of one thing and another. They think that much in the world lies in the power of the evil one and that we should be afraid of it. But if you are strong in the faith, then you are afraid of nothing. Then you are more than conqueror through Him that loved us and nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The question is whether we also believe in that victory.
It does not say that one eats all things, but that he believes he may eat all things. Whether he actually does so is another matter. And whether it is wise is also something else. 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 speak extensively about this. Paul says that if by eating meat he makes his brother stumble, he would eat no flesh while the world standeth. Not because it may not be done, but because he does not think it wise, because it brings division. That changes nothing about his faith. Whether one does all things is determined by our position as members of the body of Christ.
It is clear that it is not the intention that the strong become weak, but that the weak become strong. If the weak are to become strong, then they need examples. Those examples are we who are strong in the faith. What can we do for those who are weak in the faith? Draw them to ourselves.
Those who are cold should sit closest to the fire. They especially need it. But the common Christian practice is usually the opposite. Those who are cold are thrown out because they do not fit the fellowship. They are not tolerated. Away with them then. Precisely those who according to our standards are not good, who as Christians are not good—precisely them we should draw to ourselves.

Romans 14:3
Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.
The strong should not despise the weak, and the weak should not judge the strong. It stands to reason that the one who is strong despises the weak, but probably the opposite is more often the case. And therefore the weak sets the norm. The rest must adapt themselves. Then the strong automatically disappear and you are left with a local fellowship consisting exclusively of weak believers.
Despise and judge are here synonyms.
The weak and the strong should at least accept one another, but the strong should draw the weak to himself.
For God hath received him. Linguistically it cannot be determined whom He has received. It can be both and it is both. God accepts believers. The weak in the faith is also a believer. The strength or measure of that faith is not determinative of whether someone goes to heaven or not, but it does have to do with the inheritance reserved for us in heaven.We should rather become strong in the faith because of the inheritance reserved for us. Therefore we should draw those who are weak to ourselves, so that they too may become strong. How can they be brought up without an example?

Romans 14:4
Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.
We should not judge another man's servant. His master does that. The nice thing is that his Master is also our Master. You had therefore better be careful.
The Lord Jesus said to Peter that whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 18:18. People have made of that that one should here bind and loose, regarding that word as jurisdiction, in the sense of imprisoning or denying someone access to the church. But that is not what it is about at all. These Scripture passages are used to justify ecclesiastical jurisdiction. That is of course complete nonsense, for against that stand Scripture passages like this in Romans 14, that every man's servant stands or falls to his own master. Should we catch someone in a crime, then we should in all humility correct him. That is something different from sending the Inquisition after him. We should rather receive those who are weak in the faith.
Paul writes to Timothy that a servant of the Lord should also be able to bear with those who are disobedient or do not take the word of God seriously or hold to false doctrine, in the hope that they may at some point return from their error.
The other believer stands or falls to his own Master, yet he shall be holden up: for the Lord is able to make him stand.
It does not say God, but Lord, in the sense of master.
The Master of that servant is able to make him stand. For that is the intention. Instead of immediately condemning the weak, one should realise that it would be normal for the weak to grow and become stronger. That is the intention and not the other way round. That this sometimes goes slowly and looks little hopeful may indeed be so, but therefore one should not condemn such a person but rather bear with him.
Here indeed the example is used of whether one may eat all things or not, but you should understand that eating in the Bible is the picture of the whole of life, in which we take things in or not. It concerns not only everything that comes on our plate, but also everything we hear and see, everything we allow ourselves to be told and not told, and so on. That lies behind this.
Hence we are expected to sit at the Lord's table, not only during what we call the celebration of the Lord's Supper. We sit at the Lord's table and He gives us what we need.
Now follows another example.

Differences in Faith and Practice

Romans 14:5
One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.
One esteems one day above another, another esteems all the days alike.
The weak regards one day as more important than another for religious reasons—whether the sabbath or the first day of the week. The other esteems all the days—not alike, but equally high. For him it is always sabbath or always the first day of the week. For we have entered into rest for the remainder of our lives (Hebrews 4), or rather we

always celebrate the first day of the week because we live from the resurrection of Christ.
But let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. What we do, and what should later flow from it, should come from our own mind, from our personal convictions. It must arise from what we ourselves believe, not from what another believes; otherwise we live under law—of whoever it may be.
We are also changed inwardly; we are transformed by the renewing of our mind.
If we live from our own convictions, there is no room for others to dominate us. But in 1 Corinthians 5 someone is put out of the church, is he not? That cannot be, for one cannot be put out of the church. That is the body of Christ. Once you are a member of it, you cannot be removed. For you have received eternal life. Eternal life is eternal because you cannot lose it. The gifts of God are without repentance. Once given, it remains given. We can do nothing to change that.
In 1 Corinthians 5 it does not say that such a person should be barred from our gatherings, but that we should not keep company with such a one. We may often know one another from our gatherings, but we do not associate further. That is not a church matter but an individual matter.
It is true that we who are strong in the faith should draw those who are weak to ourselves, but the assumption is that the weak in faith is of good will. There are many Scripture passages that say we should turn away from certain people, without questioning whether those certain ones are our brothers or sisters, because it is not stated. We should turn away from them because they are not of good will, because they consciously want something other than what the word of God says. We should rather not associate with them. That is different from exercising discipline, which in practice usually amounts to putting someone out of the church. That is foolish. As though our own self-made church with its own self-made walls had any value before God. There is but one church, and that is it. We are not in charge of it, but merely members. There is but one Master, one Head, one Lord, and He sees to the affairs.
Besides the sabbath and Sunday, there is also the issue of Easter, Whitsun, and Christmas, and the new moons; but if you are strong in the faith, it makes no difference, for every day our life is devoted to the Lord and not merely one day of the week. Nevertheless, if you are weak in the faith you could begin with one day in the week and later learn that all the things that apply on Sunday also apply on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
However that may be, let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Romans 14:6
He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.
He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord.
You can forget the rest of the sentence, for it ought not to be there and has been omitted again in later translations.It does not concern not regarding, but regarding one day above another, or regarding all the days. Not regarding a day simply does not occur.
It therefore says - He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;
He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks;
and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

It is a biblical and especially a New Testament fact that one gives thanks before a meal. Nothing is to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving. The idea is namely that particularly the meal, as a picture of the whole of life—of everything man receives in his life—is first sacrificed to the gods. Because we do not acknowledge them we do it differently. We also consciously do not acknowledge those idols, but acknowledge only one Source of life and express that by giving thanks before the meal. It is not required, but it is a good custom, though we should realise that it is not merely about that meal. It is rather pitiful if you thank the Lord only for the meal you take. The Lord has something far greater and far more to give than merely your meat and drink. We thank Him for the life He gives us. If you are afraid that something is wrong with your food, that the devil has power over it, that it is occultly tainted, you can easily remove that by thanking the Lord for it. If it really were of the devil, you cannot insult him more than by not thanking him but thanking our Lord for it.

Romans 14:7
For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Romans 14:8
For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.
We have already encountered this terminology in Romans 6. We should present our members unto the Lord as instruments of righteousness. We have died unto sin and unto the law and we live unto the Lord. That means, for the Lord. Whatever or whoever we are, we are His property and therefore He cares for us.
Even among believers who say that for the Lord's sake we may do this and not that, it is often thought that the Lord determines when we die. If that is so, then why do we make such a fuss? That is inconsistent thinking. If we die, He has not taken us to Himself, for He had already done that much earlier. The Lord is not sitting up there deciding whether it is our time or not. Your time is up when your body can no longer bear it. If you are strong you grow old, and if you are very strong you grow even older. That is not determined by the Lord. That does not mean He never intervenes, but that is the exception. You should not make that the rule.
The great idea remains that we live and die unto the Lord—for the Lord, namely in His service. Since we have been born again, we are children of God and thereby servants of God. We give account of our life not to other believers but to the Lord. And conversely, we also do not demand account from other believers, for they are like us in the service of the same Lord.
That that service looks different is due among other things to one being weak in the faith and another strong. We who are strong were once weak too. We too had to learn one thing and another in our lives. You should therefore give others time and opportunity to learn; you should also give them opportunity to make their own mistakes; you should give them opportunity to run into the wall themselves. They must learn. If they were to learn to obey—well, perhaps so, but not us, but the Lord who speaks His word to them.

Romans 14:9
For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Died and rose is not the same. Rose and revived can be taken by us as much the same, but that is not obvious. Died and rose are two things, and rose and revived are also two things.
Rose refers to the historical fact of His resurrection on a certain day. Revived refers to all that followed after. For He lives—not because He once became alive, though that is so—but that He lives means that He does something, even to our days, for us and in us. He would also do something. It is not merely a statistical fact but a dynamic fact. It concerns the active living Christ. He is raised to the glory of the Father, that we also might walk in newness of life. Just like Him. He would do something. He rose that He might yet have something to do. In His resurrection He was appointed to the office of High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He rose that He might subject the world—living and dead—to Himself and judge them.
Acts 17:30–31
And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.For that purpose He raised that man from the dead, that all should be judged righteously by Him. The Anointed One announced in the Old Testament is He who will first subject all nations to Himself and rule over them with a rod of iron, or as Peter puts it, He stands ready to judge the living and the dead. The thrust here in Romans 14 is that the Lord will judge. There is a time appointed for that, and that time is not now. Some think that because the Lord apparently does not judge Himself, they should do it.He will therefore also judge us—His servants.

Romans 14:10
But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:12
So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
Judge and despise are again regarded as synonyms, just as in verse 3. We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There we shall be judged.
Verse 12: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
In verse 10 it is still all, and here every one of us. Not merely collectively but all individually. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God, not for his brother or sister.
Give account = render account.
The term servant from verse 4 and account in verse 12 directly relate to the biblical concept of dispensation, namely household administration, in which not only household but also accounting is involved. The household is concluded with a reckoning. Here it concerns our present dispensation, in which Christ stands at the head of that household. We are part of it, and at the end of our dispensation we shall give account to the Lord of that house. We are His house, the house of God, in which we dwell (Hebrews 3 and 1 Timothy 3).In verse 10 it is said that we shall all be set before the judgment seat of Christ, and in verse 12 that we shall give account of ourselves to God,

so that here too you see the deity of Christ confirmed. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son.
The judgment seat of Christ = the place from which judgment is pronounced. The elevation of the seat symbolises the exalted position of justice. You still see it in old English films, where in a courtroom the judges sit very high and look down on the accused. That is because of the symbolic meaning. It is from an elevation. That is called a seat.
The judgment seat of Christ is also found in 2 Corinthians 5. The thought that we shall be judged by Christ occurs much more often, but the expression "judgment seat of Christ" appears only twice.
2 Corinthians 5:10
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
Here therefore you find exactly the same thought. Paul reproves the Corinthians. They were decidedly weak in the faith. It is not for nothing that the theme of meat sacrificed to idols occurs almost only in these Corinthian epistles. They applied worldly standards to their church life. Paul says that must not be so. We do not live according to worldly principles nor according to legal principles. We live according to the principles of the New Covenant and shall be judged by Christ Himself. That is at the time of what we call the rapture of the church. At that time we shall or shall not be rewarded and receive our inheritance. That is personal for each one of us, for each is responsible for his own personal life. This means that we should not judge others, but neither the other way round. Others are also not lords over us. We cannot later say to the Lord that we did this or that or did not do it because this or that brother told us so. You cannot hide behind that. You also cannot use your preacher as an excuse and say you did not know better because you learned it from him. But who appointed that preacher? You yourselves did, and in a democratic way at that. Moreover, you have your own Bible and have received the Spirit who would lead you into all truth. It is our own responsibility.
We shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. Everything we could keep hidden—even perhaps from ourselves—will be manifest before Him. He will also judge the hidden things of the heart (Romans 2). The idea remains that we shall receive reward, a crown, or glory, and we know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.Romans 14:11
For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Romans 14:12
So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.Christ will judge all and everyone, that every knee should bow to Him and every tongue confess God. Paul bases that thought on statements from the Old Testament. Even all church truth in the New Testament is based on Old Testament statements.
So also here. For it is written in Isaiah 45:23:
I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.
Here it is a very general statement. It is a statement you can never get around. Moreover it is a statement that once again shows that Jehovah of the Old Testament is the same as Christ in the New Testament.

Sworn = a solemn promise confirmed by law is made.
A word of righteousness is exactly the same. It is a word concerning right. It is recorded.
So it is!It shall not return = it shall not be revoked.
Every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall swear to Him, confess Him.
Everyone will have to acknowledge Him.
When this same verse is quoted in Philippians 2, Paul says that Christ has received a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. That is not added in Isaiah 45, but with those words he says that the words of Isaiah 45 do not concern only a few people living at that time but all who have ever lived.
That every knee shall bow to Him does not mean that everyone will be saved, but that everyone will be judged. Every knee shall bow to Him. Willingly or unwillingly is not the issue. It means that the Lord will humble them, subject them to Himself, manifest Himself as their Lord, and pronounce judgment over them. Indeed, also over the church, but over all people who live and have ever lived.
Isaiah 45:24
Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.
So you see once again that not all people will be saved, but that precisely at that occasion many people will be finally lost. That is on the last day and in what Revelation calls the second death. Only believers will be saved.
“As I live,” saith the LORD, is the summary of what precedes the quotation from Isaiah 45. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and will judge the living and the dead. Therefore it is wise to come to Him before you die. He will pronounce judgment over everything and everyone. Paul says that this also applies to the church. The church is the first category over which He will pronounce judgment, then at His coming again over the then living humanity. He will then gather all nations before His face and judge them. After that, on the last day, He will also judge the dead. That therefore happens in three phases at three different occasions, but over everything and everyone.If we then know this...

Romans 14:13
Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.
If we must be so critical, let us then be critical of ourselves—that you give your brother no offence or occasion to stumble. We should be careful with weak brothers. We should not make their life more difficult than it already is. We should draw them to ourselves and thereby be an example to them. Not to show what we may all do and that we stand in liberty, but to show that the chief guideline for the believer is that he should experience and practise the unity of the church. Other brothers and sisters can keep you on the right path by being an example, however difficult that may sometimes be. That is how upbringing works. That is how it works for the natural man and for the spiritual man too. That is our responsibility as strong believers—that we should be careful for the weak believers. Not that they should remain weak, but that they should grow up in the faith and be strengthened in the faith.
The work of the Lord is the building up of the church and therefore in practice the building up of the church members. Insofar as we are involved in the work of the Lord—

and we are—we are therefore involved in the building up of the church. Not in the building up of the organisation, but the building up of the church members. It concerns people—people who are not our property, over whom we have nothing to say, but whom we can help and whose infirmities we should bear, instead of pleasing ourselves.
We should please our neighbour for his good to edification (Romans 15:2. Not merely please, but to edification. That is the basis of our Christian life. We do not live under the principles of the law, not under the dominion of the law. Nor under the dominion of sin, of the sinful nature. The problem is that many know no other option, because they have never learned otherwise. We live from entirely different principles. We please the brothers and sisters to edification. For that purpose we should also remain with one another and remain one another's neighbour. We should therefore draw those who are weak in the faith to ourselves.
We judge one another no more. The Lord would do that. To Him belongs vengeance and He will repay. The Lord is Man enough to do that Himself.

Romans 14:14
I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
We are continually confronted from all sides with things that are not good, that are unhealthy, that are dangerous, and so on. What nonsense all of it. Crossing the street is also dangerous, but that is not forbidden by law. Other things are also deemed dangerous that are forbidden by law. There seems to be a certain arbitrariness in it. However that may be, everything has to do with life. You began with that, but in the end it is your death. That is not to be cynical, but that is how it is. You must be able to put it in perspective; then you go through life much more cheerfully. For we have after all received eternal life, so what can happen to us? We are even assured that neither death nor life, nor anything else can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. There is nothing to add or subtract from that. Of course there are dangerous things, but to live in fear of them? The Bible speaks very differently about that. We know and are persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself. If it yet proves unclean, it can have a physical effect, but that comes because we have too little resistance to certain things. That a man gets boils comes from certain bacteria, but the idea that you can arm yourself against them is nonsense, for the bacteria that cause those boils every man has. The question is why one gets boils and another does not. Because some people have no resistance to them. That does not lie with the bacteria but with a lack of resistance. Then you can blame the bacteria and say they are dangerous, but they are not dangerous at all, for a normal man has resistance to them. If they are dangerous, then it lies with yourself. Crossing the street is also not dangerous—if you look properly. You should not blame other things, regard them as unclean or dangerous. It lies with yourself.
Also in spiritual matters people like to persuade us that certain things are dangerous. That may be so, but this whole world is ruled by the prince of the power of the air. He has a great deal of staff, so that the whole world is governed by demonism. And that is still the lowest staff. Are they dangerous? They can indeed cause a great deal of misery. Are they a danger to us? No. Why not? Because we are children of God and therefore immunised against them. We believe not every spirit. We try the spirits whether they are of God. We need not investigate whether certain things are of the devil or not. In

practice everything is of the devil, but we usually take no notice of that. We know that the whole earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. That in practice the devil rules over it we know well, but we take no notice of that. We have a good immune system. You can know exactly what is occult and what the devil does with it, but what do you gain by that? You need not know the lie to know the truth. You must know the truth. Everything that does not agree with it is by definition a lie. We are interested in the truth and allow ourselves to be taught in it.
So, why unclean? Only if we ourselves reckon certain things unclean (logizomai), then it is unclean for you personally. We sometimes allow ourselves to be persuaded that certain things are forbidden, dangerous, or unclean, so that when we come into contact with them we immediately have trouble with our conscience. Pity. You had better direct yourself to the truth, and the Bible says that nothing is unclean of itself unless you yourself reckon it unclean. The whole world is dangerous, but fortunately we are delivered from it. We are drawn out of that camp and enter into the innermost sanctuary. We devote our bodies to Him who sits on the throne of grace. If we do that, the Lord cares for us. He who is our Head has received a position far above everything that is dangerous. We are in Him more than conquerors. We have received a position in Him far above angels, thrones, dominions, principalities, and every name that is named. We have a God who has begun a good work in us and will perform it until the day of Christ. We have a High Priest who is Head of His house. We are His house and He cares for us. So what do you make a fuss about, as though the devil could come between? Only when you think you may not cycle on Sunday and yet you do, then you have problems. Then you yourself reckon it unclean.
Matthew 15:11
Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.
What comes out is of a different nature from what goes in, but it is not for nothing that it concerns the mouth. James devotes a whole chapter to the fact that what comes out of the mouth defiles the man. Man is defiled by his own tongue. What a man says he says in the first place to himself, apart from whether others hear it. Speaking something aloud immediately has its effect on the speaker himself. He is compelled to formulate his thoughts. At the moment he has done that, it is fixed for him. Therefore it is better not to speak too quickly.It is dangerous to give ear to your own ideas and notions. It is better to be silent and listen to the word of the Lord.
1 Timothy 4:1–3
Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.
Last times = from the resurrection of Christ onwards.
Faith = listening to the Lord who speaks.
1 Timothy 4:4–5
For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:
For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.The word of God says that nothing is unclean of itself.

By prayer = by submission to the Lord.
According to Titus 1:13 man should be sound in the faith. For man nothing is so healthy as faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he no longer dies. But even as to the old man it is healthy. It spares us a great deal of annoyance and stress, which are bad for your health.
Titus 1:14
Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.
Fables = literarily of high quality, culturally too, but nevertheless unhealthy. They are commandments of men that turn from the truth.
Where one lives under the law, there one has no interest in the truth, for why should you know the truth if you have a collection of rules by which you live? The truth is then only troublesome. Asking after the truth is not desired in circles where one lives under the law.
Titus 1:15
Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.
Titus 1:16
They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.
We are cleansed by the washing of water—namely by the word, by Christ Himself, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, by the blood of the Lamb, by the living Christ. If our hearts are cleansed from an evil conscience, then nothing is unclean to us.
But what if we are not cleansed? Then it is high time you were cleansed. That is the preaching. We must first be born again and cleansed by the Lord Jesus Christ.
Thereafter at any rate nothing is unclean to us.For the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure. The more unbelieving you are, the more defiled you are, just as the more believing you are, the more pure you are.
The Lord Jesus would do His cleansing work in us, and that is for us immediately the end of the whole story about uncleanness.
The mind and conscience of the unbelieving are defiled.

If our heart condemns us—whether others or ourselves, regardless of whom—where we condemn, God nevertheless acquits, for God is greater than our heart. Moreover, we do not know all things and therefore cannot judge. That is the dilemma of our judgement. One can pronounce judgement only if one knows all things. The first responsibility of the court is therefore the discovery of truth.If your heart condemns, do not take it too much to heart, for God is greater than our heart and moreover He knows all things.
1 John 3:21
Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.Our heart should not condemn us, for God judges.
Our relationship with God depends to a large extent on whether we condemn ourselves or others. If we condemn ourselves, we soon have the idea that God also condemns us. In practice this means that our open relationship with Him comes under pressure. We then think that God also sees us that way, and suddenly God is very far away. But we should live in fellowship with our Lord, and that is possible only if He has cleansed us. In practice that is possible only if we know that all things are lawful to us. This is not an

encouragement to do all things, but all things are indeed lawful. God knows better than we do, and He says that we are perfect in Christ. That is our position. He will remember our sins no more. Whether there are sins or not does not matter. The Lord will not remember them. We do remember them, and our heart condemns us in that, and then we feel guilty toward the Lord. Thereby we lose our confidence. But if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God.
1 John 3:22
And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.
We do those things that are pleasing in His sight. It does not concern what we think of things, how we experience them, or how our statistics look. It may indeed be that certain things are dangerous for man, but what does it matter—this is not our world. We know but one God, and we allow ourselves to be taught by God, and He says that we are clean. Full stop! But do we not have dirty feet? How so? The Lord continually cleanses them. He has placed us in liberty, and He does a work in us. He has delivered us from the dominion of sin, from the dominion of the law, and thereby from the dominion of death. What then is still dangerous? Nothing. That is what it is about, and in that assurance we should live..

Romans 14:23
And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.
Whatsoever is not of faith is missing the mark. We should after all live by faith, to the saving of the soul. If we do not do so, you can regard that as missing the mark and therefore as sin.

Romans 15 - Christ an Example of Self-Denial

Romans 15:1
We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
If there is any debt at all, if anything may be expected of us by way of satisfaction or the like, then we should bear the infirmities of the weak instead of pleasing ourselves. We are part of that one church in which we bear individual responsibility.

Romans 15:2
Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.
We should please our neighbour for his good, to edification.
The good = edification = building up.
It concerns the building up of a house—the church—consisting of living stones joined together with that one living Stone, Jesus Christ. It is not just any house but a temple. That temple should be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. It concerns the building up and possibly the growth of the church—the increase. Not only in a quantitative sense but also in a qualitative sense; not only growth in numbers but also the spiritual growth of the church members individually. That is called edification. According to Ephesians 4 all the gifts within the church serve that purpose. Those gifts are a ministry for the building up of the body of Christ.

We have a role model in this—namely Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:3
For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.
The Lord Jesus took His responsibility upon Himself and limited Himself. He devoted Himself to a specific ministry. Not only in the past but certainly also in the present. In the days of His flesh He did a work for the whole world—a deed for those who reproached God. For the powerless, for sinners, for the unrighteous, for enemies, or whatever they may be called. But also in His resurrection He does the will of God. He has been appointed to the office of Head of the church, as High Priest of His people, as Shepherd of His flock, in which He is faithful to Him who appointed Him.
If Christ had pleased Himself, He would have brought judgement on all humanity two thousand years ago and then established His kingdom on earth. Instead He postponed that for a time for the sake of His present work in the church. He gave Himself for us. He does not please Himself but devotes His life to the church. God raised Him and set Him at His right hand far above all principality and power and might, and gave Him to the church as Head. That is the limitation. He has put all things under His feet, but God gave Him to the church as Head. Thereby the church is in one stroke counted above all those principalities and powers. He does a work in the church and only in the church. He first calls a people out of the Gentiles for His name. He does not call the Gentiles but calls a people out of the Gentiles. He does not build His kingdom on earth but builds a people out of the nations and moreover places that people in heaven. His glory on earth comes only afterwards, but come it certainly will.
He therefore did not please Himself, but as it is written: The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me - Psalm 69:9; Isaiah 53:4–5.
You would expect it to say: Behold, here am I to do Thy will, O God.
Reproaches = rejection. You can apply the quotation to the world, but just as well to those believers who confess Him as Lord and Saviour but deny the power thereof. For that is what this section is about. When people think they must run the church themselves, build it themselves, they reproach the Lord. He would do that. Also when people occupy themselves with cleansing themselves and others, they reproach the Lord, for He said that He would do that.
We should not reproach Him but submit to Him, take Him as our example, and therefore, as the Lord bears the weak, so should we. We should have love for one another and do everything to give the other no offence or cause of stumbling, but also bear the infirmities of the weak in such a way that they become strong. That they be trained. That is our ministry and our contribution to the work of the Lord.
Psalm 69:9
For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.
At the cleansing of the temple by the Lord Jesus the disciples were reminded of these words: The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up (John 2:17.
The house mentioned in Psalm 69 proves in John 2 to be the temple in Jerusalem. It does not concern only that temple, however, but rather the present temple—namely the church—which should be cleansed. As the Lord Jesus cleansed the temple, so in our days He cleanses the church. He gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify it,

having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:25–26. That is the description of the high-priestly function of Christ for the benefit of the church. He washes our feet (John 13). He is responsible for His house. He is faithful over all His house, over which He is appointed.
For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. He does a work in His house at the cost of His own honour. Therefore Hebrews 13 says that we should go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. While the Lord Himself bears reproach as He does a work in us, so should we also bear reproach if we do a work for the benefit of the church. It does not concern honour but service to Him with all the consequences thereof. If therefore we please our neighbour for his good, it does not concern their having a high opinion of us and honouring us. That is not the intention at all. We should do those things that we may receive that honour from God. Not now, but in the future, at the time of our appearing before the judgment seat of Christ. For what is good is not determined by our neighbours but by Him in whose service we stand and whose property we are.
Now comes an explanation.

Romans 15:4
For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.
From everything that is written we should learn. Although the words of Psalm 69 were written about the Lord Jesus Christ, those words are nevertheless also applicable to us. Everything written about Christ in the Old Testament is beforehand also applicable to the church, which is after all His body. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ in heaven because we are His body, and therefore everything written about Him is in the second place also applicable to us. He is our example and we should be His followers. This applies not only to the blessings but just as much to the reproaches.
We can draw instruction from what is written and thus through patience and comfort of the scriptures have hope.
Patience = endurance, perseverance, longsuffering.
Comfort = parakaleo = the work of the Comforter = Paraclete. God is also called the God of patience and consolation.
This verse shows that our hope is to a large extent determined by our own commitment, by our devotion to the work of the Lord. If you devote yourself to that work, you logically also have expectations of it. That is also right, for we should receive reward for it. That is our hope—the appearing of the glory.
We find encouragement, building up, support through the scriptures. That gives us strength, and we need that too. We do not need a pep talk from some manager but the word of God. That gives us hope and confirms us in our doing and not doing; that gives direction and reveals to us what the present work of Christ is. This is also motivating for our commitment. Hence the Comforter would lead us into all truth.
We have hope, and hope makes alive. The intensity of life is determinative for our hope. People who make nothing of their life also have no future expectation. People who live intensely generally also live longer, though they are busier.
1 Corinthians 10:11
Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

All those Old Testament histories happened to them for examples and are written for our admonition. They truly happened, but they are moreover written that we should draw instruction from them.
We therefore have hope through patience and comfort of the scriptures. That hope is sustained by our being taught through the scriptures. Those scriptures are presented to us as the bread of life that came down from heaven. It is manna, the spiritual food we take in, whereby we are also spiritually built up. Through patience we also actually devote ourselves to those scriptures and submit to them with all the practical consequences thereof. Then we have hope.

Romans 15:5
Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:
In verse 4 it is our patience and our comfort, but God Himself is the God of patience and consolation. That means He brings these things about. He gives us patience and consolation. Where we receive that from Him, we will logically also be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. It does not say that God gives that we be likeminded. We do not receive that disposition just like that. He gives it to us, but along a certain route—along the route of patience and comfort of the scriptures. From that flows likemindedness one toward another
.I would that they all may be one. Everyone knows that Christendom in the world is highly divided. People think that should not be so, for we should after all be likeminded. Therefore a committee is appointed to study the matter so that we can go forward together and gradually come to an organisational unity by forming a higher governing layer above the different parts of Christendom to coordinate the whole. And so unity is established. In the Bible, however, church governments do not appear, and where they do appear they are immediately condemned—not because they would not function, but because they simply should not be there. Here it is said how law works. Where we have patience and therefore comfort of the scriptures, there we will be likeminded—if at least the organisation does not make it impossible. Patience and comfort come from God, not from the organisation. In general the scripture is rejected and one trusts in one's own organisation. But one should rather cease trying to establish what God has long since established. We are one in Christ, and if we submit to His work, we will be likeminded. That is likemindedness according to Christ Jesus. For we should be directed toward Him. That is our disposition. There we meet one another on the basis of our devotion to Him. Our unity has nothing to do with our consensus but with our devotion to Him. We can disagree about many things, but that is separate from our devotion to Him.
We are likeminded one toward another—not with the world, but in our devotion to Him. We are directed toward Him, with the result…

Romans 15:6
That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
With one mind = bearing together. This concept corresponds to patience. Patience refers to complete devotion to Him. With one mind means bearing as one, jointly.

Whatever one bears, if one bears something, one bears responsibility, whatever it may consist of. With one mind therefore means bearing responsibility jointly.
With one mouth = as it were. Jointly we obviously do not have one mouth. Each has his own mouth. They are all different mouths, but they say the same thing. That need not be literally the same, as long as the content of what is spoken is the same.
In biblical illustrations the church consists of a collection of beings—saints, angels, or elders—and jointly they have the same text, which they then continually recite. That text is: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men. Or: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, who was and is and is to come.
However that may be, the text that comes from the mouth of the church is a text in which God is glorified. That is figurative language. So also here. The mouth is mentioned, but all body parts are meant. In James only the tongue is mentioned, but in reality it concerns the whole doing and not doing of man. It is summed up in the most important body part of man.
Just like singing in a service. We begin with singing in a service. Not that this singing is in itself so important, but it is illustrative of who we are—that we belong together. That is not only a Christian phenomenon; in the world people do it too. All noses pointing the same way. Think of a club song as an expression of the unity in such a club.
So it is with believers. We sing together as with one mouth. Community singing. That presupposes fellowship and is also useful for promoting fellowship. So we should with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the purpose of the church and therefore also the purpose of our own life. If we know that purpose, it binds us to one another.

Romans 15:7
Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.
For that reason we should also receive one another. The church is expected to be a great choir in which everyone may join. We who are good for nothing have been made able by God to serve Him under the New Covenant. For that purpose we have been added to that one church.
He received us that God might be glorified in our lives.

Romans 15:8
Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:
And I say = he is going to tell it once more. What I say is this…Jesus Christ became a minister of the circumcision, of the law.
Why? For the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers. He came into this world under the law and therefore as a servant of the circumcision, that He might redeem those who were under the law (Galatians 4, with the result that after they were redeemed from the law, the promises of God would be fulfilled—namely the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The dominion of the law held back the promises to Abraham.

Romans 15:9
And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

The intention was that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy. Not because of the law, but because of grace and therefore mercy. Verses 6 and 7 said that we should glorify God.
The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world for this purpose under the law. He fulfilled the law by suffering and dying. That was a work in humiliation, in which He bore reproach and endured shame. That was to achieve this purpose.
Verses 9–12 say that this idea was already brought forward in the Old Testament—namely that God would not be glorified only by the Jewish people, or by all Israel, but by Gentiles.
Judah or Jew is traditionally sometimes translated as “God-praiser.” A Jew would by definition praise God. That rests on a rather odd application of the name Judah. The Bible says that the name of the Lord would rather be blasphemed through Israel and that instead the Gentiles would praise God. Not under the law, for the Gentiles live under the mercy of God. Since the fulfilment of the law the Gentiles would glorify the name of God.
Then follow several Scripture passages in which this was already announced.
For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. That is a quotation from Psalm 18:49 and 2 Samuel 22:50. That was when David was delivered from the hand of Saul.
Psalm 18:49
Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.
Psalm 18:48–50
He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.
Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.
Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.
These words were indeed written by David, but he was a prophet and therefore wrote about the Lord Jesus. Thereby the deliverance from the hand of Saul is a picture of deliverance from the dominion of the law. The victory over Saul is the victory over the law. David escaped Saul, as the Lord Jesus escaped the law—namely by His death and resurrection. That is spoken of in verse 49. The Lord Jesus is delivered from His enemies, and God has highly exalted Him and set Him at His right hand. This is described in many places. And when it says He is delivered from His enemies, it usually adds that He would thereafter do something. In this case it says that He would praise God among the Gentiles and sing praises to His name.
Read for example also Psalm 22. There we find a rather detailed description of the crucifixion given by the Crucified One.
Psalm 22:18–22
They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.
But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.
Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.
I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

That is a fourfold prayer for deliverance from death. If Thou deliverest me…
Psalm 22:22
I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
Psalm 22:25
My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
The Lord would after His resurrection from the dead declare the name of the Lord to His brethren—namely in a great congregation. That is exactly the description of this present dispensation. Originally illustrated by the fact that the Lord immediately after His resurrection did not appear to the Jews but only to His disciples, whom He called His brethren. He made Himself known to His own. He now does not make Himself known to the world but only to His own. When we submit to the Messiah by coming to faith, He makes Himself known to us. Then He speaks to us and gives us comfort of the scriptures and thus builds His church.
In that light read also Psalm 18:49. First prayer for deliverance from death and then He will praise God. He does that in the church, but that is among the Gentiles. That is among His brethren, but those brethren are chiefly from the Gentiles.
It is true that the Lord appeared to His twelve disciples in the upper room, but the most important appearance was of the Lord to five hundred at once. That was in Galilee, fully named as Galilee of the Gentiles. Not the Jews, but the Gentiles. While the Jewish people are unbelieving, the Lord yet fulfils His promises—not to the Jewish people but to the Gentiles and in particular to the church out of the Gentiles. The point is only that the Old Testament already says that He would praise God among the Gentiles.
Romans 15:10
And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.
Again = the next in the enumeration.
Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people! Quoted from Deuteronomy 32:43.
Deuteronomy 31 and 32 speak of the situation in our days, in which Israel is officially unbelieving, whereby God hides His face from Israel and the peoples (Deuteronomy 31:17–18; 32:18–20. The Lord does nothing about it and sees how it ends. That is the situation in our days. In that same context we now read verse 43.
Deuteronomy 32:43
Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.
Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people. That is an apposition = an explanatory addition is given without a conjunction, preposition, or other word. In this case: ye Gentiles, that is His people. This means they represent the same thing. The Gentiles are His people. Not all Gentiles, to be sure, but only those who rejoice in Him, those who believe in Him.
This is not new, for we already came across it in this chapter on the occasion of Romans 10:19.Deuteronomy 32:21
They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.
Implying that this is a Gentile people. A Gentile people would provoke Israel to jealousy. In practice that is the church. Deuteronomy 32:43 speaks of that. Because it is

translated in the Septuagint as “ye Gentiles, with His people,” it is also translated that way in Romans 15, but that is a misunderstanding. It is: Ye Gentiles, His people.
Romans 15:11
And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.
Quoted from Psalm 117:1.
Psalm 117:1–2
O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.
For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.
The thrust of the psalm is that it does not concern Israel but the Gentiles—not in the situation under the law but free from the law.

Romans 15:12
And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.
Quoted from Isaiah 11:10.
Jesse = the father of David.
Isaiah 11:10
And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.
Which days? Those of verse 1.
Isaiah 11:1
And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:
That is not Christmas but Easter. The stem, the tree, was cut down when the Lord Jesus died, but a rod came forth from that cut-down stem of Jesse. People thought He was dead, but life came forth from it. They had cut down the tree, but there appeared the Messiah. This does not concern the birth but the resurrection of the Lord. That cannot be missed, for the next verse reads…Isaiah 11:2
And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
We all know that the Lord Jesus received the Holy Spirit in His resurrection, or conversely, because He received the Holy Spirit, He definitively rose from the dead (Acts 2). God had given His Spirit to this Jesus, and whoever believes in Him receives the same Spirit.
The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me. This too concerns the resurrection of Christ. It concerns those days, also in verse 10.
Isaiah 11:10
And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.
The Lord Jesus Christ would in His resurrection in the first place have a relationship with the Gentiles. The Gentiles would seek Him. Elsewhere in Isaiah we read: I am found of them that sought me not; I am found of them that asked not after me.
Paul here in Romans 15 gives several Scripture passages in addition to Romans 9 and 10, to show that the work of the Lord in our days takes place among the nations, among the Gentiles namely. The intention of that is that the Gentiles should praise, laud, and glorify the name of the Lord.

Back to Romans 15.

Romans 15:12
And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.
It will meanwhile be clear that Paul here speaks about the church. The emphasis here in Romans 15 is on praising. We as Gentiles will trust in Him and thereby glorify Him. That is the purpose of God's present work. That is therefore also the purpose God has with our life. Not that we should make something of our life, but that the Lord should live His life in us, to the glory of God. For the creation should be to the glory of the Creator. We had gone astray and become unprofitable, but God has nevertheless made us able to serve Him (2 Corinthians 3).

Romans 15:13
Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.
What in verse 5 is called the God of patience and consolation is now called the God of hope. In verse 4 it already stood that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. God is the One who gives patience and consolation and therefore He is the God of patience and consolation, but thereby also the God of hope. God gives us hope; He has made promises to us. He has spoken about the future. He works with His power in us in such a way that we are able actually to receive the inheritance reserved for us in heaven. He has given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.
May that God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing. That joy and peace we came across in the four Scripture passages mentioned earlier.
Peace = fellowship. We think peace is the absence of war. But that is a misunderstanding. Peace is an active concept both in Hebrew and Greek. Peace presupposes union. I do not know if the word derives from that. Peace presupposes that a positive fellowship of at least two parties has been established—obviously parties that were previously at odds.
Moreover, peace in the Bible is characteristic of the New Covenant. That is after all called the Covenant of Peace. Hence the Jews, who are by definition Judaistic, wish one another peace. There is good reason for that, for it never comes and therefore one wishes it to one another. One strives for it without ever attaining it. Peace comes only through the Prince of Peace. On the one hand one hopes the Messiah comes, but on the other hand one hopes He does not come, for He will put an end to the difference between Jew and Gentile and bring judgement on Jerusalem and on the Judaistic and orthodox system. The orthodox Jews know that all too well. And therefore one wishes one another that the Messiah comes, but hopes it never happens.
Nevertheless, we have peace. He is our Prince of Peace and therefore we have fellowship. It is another word for likemindedness.
May the God of hope fill us with joy and peace. Not merely a little, but fully, in believing. That is what you are occupied with—believing. It is a verb. You believe by living from what God has said. You are not occupied with being convinced, but our whole doing and not doing is drawn from what God has made known to us in His word. Why does God fill us with joy and peace? That we may abound in hope.

How can you now abound in hope? That is not merely having a strong hope, but that you indeed live from that future expectation, from the promises of God. Therefore, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58. Before that it stands that we should inherit the kingdom. To abound in hope means that you are stedfast, unmoveable, and abounding in the work of the Lord. That you reach forth to the fulfilment of what God has promised you on those grounds. Is that difficult? Well, that is not so bad, for we are helped in it—namely by the power of the Holy Ghost. He is the One who brings these things about in us. He is the God of patience, He is the God of consolation, He is the God of hope, He gives these things. But everything God does He does through His word. For He is Word. He speaks and it is so. He speaks to us and where we hear His word, there that word is indeed present in us. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. God expects obedience and submission from us to that word of God. That power of the Spirit in us makes us abound in good works, and here it says He makes us abound in hope. That is our life.
Actually the epistle is concluded here. You can already smell it in the formulation. It ends with the work of God in us, the believers, individually. From the next part of the epistle we have come to the affectionate greetings. Paul speaks of his own expectations, his own ministry, his own plans in the short and longer term, and then gives various recommendations, greetings, and wishes. It is the close of the epistle, but there is still one thing and another to learn from it. In the first place about God's work in our days.

Paul's Plans

Romans 15:14
And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.
Paul has, in fact, no doubt that these things are fully functioning in the church at Rome.
The good = what makes for edification. It is not some vague notion that we can fill in as we please.
Filled with all knowledge = obviously through the scriptures from verse 4. And therefore also thoroughly furnished unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17.
Able also to admonish one another = not parakaleo, but indeed admonish, in Greek noutheteo. Warn would have been a good translation.

Romans 15:15
Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,
Paul more or less offers his apologies.
The more boldly = forwardly, freely.
You did not really need it, but it is my ministry to do this—to remind you of your position as children of God, as members of the church. He wrote words to that effect also to the Corinthians. He knew they did not appreciate his letters, but it is after all his ministry to do so, and it is from the Lord that he receives reward and not from you Corinthians. Here he says exactly the same. He does it because of the grace given to him by God. That is

obviously the same grace as in chapter 12—the responsibilities we have received as believers.

Romans 15:16
That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.
See Romans 11:13: the apostle of the Gentiles. To the Gentiles does not mean among the Gentiles but belonging to the Gentiles. However Jewish his background may have been, Paul regards himself as a Gentile and thereby as an example of those Gentiles through whom the name of the Lord is praised. He would be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.
The offering up of the Gentiles can have two meanings. One is that the Gentiles themselves are offered. We are offered. We present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. The other meaning can be that Gentiles bring offerings.
Hebrews 13:15
By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
That is what the Gentiles would do. Insofar as we bring offerings, that is in the first place this—though you should not take the lips too literally and limit the offering to that. We should with one mind and one mouth glorify, referring to our likemindedness.
As a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, Paul is an example to believers from the Gentiles—namely to the whole church. In other places he says the same: “that ye might have us for an ensample,” or “be ye followers together of me, brethren, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.
”Although he had never yet been to Rome and we do not even know by whose labour that church in Rome came into being, he nevertheless as more or less an outsider takes the liberty to set himself as an example to this church in Rome, the capital of the Gentile world empire. He says he is a Gentile and we as believers from the Gentiles should with one mind and one mouth glorify God.
Salvation and thereby the priestly office has passed from the Jews to the Gentiles. They have thereby been placed in the service of God. The church in Rome is an example of that.

Romans 15:17
I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.
Referring to the previous two verses, in which Paul says that he has after all received this ministry as apostle. When he does his work, he can also truly glory in it.

Romans 15:18
For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,
He does not speak of his own ministry, his own works, or his own ideas, but of the ministry he has received from God.
We too are inclined to think in worldly terms and look at cause and effect, results, and all such things. In the Bible it is rather different. If for example you look at Acts 4, where

Peter and John stand before the Sanhedrin to give account for their preaching on the occasion of the healing of a lame man, they are commanded by the Sanhedrin no longer to speak in the name of Jesus. Instead of then stopping to avoid greater problems, they say: “We cannot but speak.” It was their ministry, their commission, but they did not say that. They simply could not but speak. It was the Lord Himself who worked through them and in them. That is also for us believers today our only responsibility—namely that we as believers have been placed in the service of God. We have been delivered in every respect from the world, from all the principles raised to norm in it.
Therefore Paul says in verse 16 also that he would not dare to speak anything which Christ has not wrought by him. Later, in the epistles to the Corinthians, Paul speaks far more extensively about this. The Corinthians, famous for their worldly outlook, had great objections to Paul’s ministry, but he had no message from that, because he had after all received this ministry and therefore he simply carried it out, whether they liked it or not. That is essentially what he says here, but here he does not encounter that opposition as with the Corinthians. He therefore lets it rest with a few words about it. As said, in our days salvation has rightly come to the Gentiles. Paul is in his ministry an example of that, which is also expressed in the following verses.

Romans 15:19
Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.
Paul does indeed speak here of his work. He calls it fulfilling the gospel of Christ. This does not only mean that the gospel was preached, but that his conduct, his work, was also in accordance with the nature of the gospel. The nature of that gospel was among other things that salvation would be taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. Hence it was also preached with all power and at high speed to the Gentiles, from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum.
If you take a pair of compasses in your mind and place one point in Jerusalem and draw a circle touching Illyricum—that is quite a way to the north-west—but this also means that it was preached quite a way to the south-east, to all quarters. Thereby we can also establish that we know very little of Paul’s ministry. We do find an account of certain events in the book of Acts, but it is not so extensive after all. Acts is entitled the Acts of the Apostles. In fact it concerns only two apostles—namely Peter (John plays a minor role, for Peter always speaks) and Paul. James is briefly mentioned in chapter 15, but that is about it. As soon as Saul of Tarsus appears on the scene, Peter disappears. It therefore concerns the acts of only two apostles and not even simultaneously. For the rest we know nothing about the other apostles.
As far as Paul himself is concerned, he says he preached the gospel from Jerusalem (with little success, incidentally) unto Illyricum, but nowhere in the Bible is there an account of his preaching in Illyricum, at any rate not in the missionary journeys mentioned of him. We therefore do not know by far everything about Paul’s missionary activities. We find many more such statements that we cannot verify in biblical history. We know enough of Paul to know his method. That will also be the intention, but for the rest we know nothing, and of the other apostles even less.
Illyricum lies in present-day Serbia. Christ wrought through Paul by the power of signs and wonders and by the power of the Spirit of God.

Romans 15:20
Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:
He preached the gospel where others had not yet been. He did also visit places where he himself had been before. He therefore preached the gospel to those who did not know him and who had never yet heard the gospel. Was that necessary?

Romans 15:21
But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.
Paul's way of proceeding was at the same time symbolic. It is typical of the situation in our dispensation. That does not mean we must do it in the same way, but that Paul's ministry is illustrative of the situation as it has been since the first coming of Christ, whereby salvation would come to a people who did not know Him and where His name had never yet been named.
Isaiah 52:15
So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.
Isaiah 53:1
Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
Paul had already quoted this last verse in Romans 10:16. The answer to such rather rhetorical questions is that the preaching or salvation has rightly come to that other people of whom the Lord spoke when He said: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matthew 21:43. It was taken from the Jews (Jerusalem) and would be given to the Gentiles and more specifically to the ten tribes of Israel. In that connection Isaiah 53:1 had already been quoted, and here the preceding verse is quoted and applied personally to Paul, though it actually applies to the Lord Jesus and to the gospel.
In Acts 13 Paul is on his first missionary journey in Antioch. He preached there in the synagogue. The Jews there show some interest, but the Gentiles too. They ask whether they may come and listen next week. That was allowed. Then it appears that the Gentiles have so much interest in the gospel that the Jews become jealous, so that they are filled with envy, as had already been announced in the Old Testament. They would after all be provoked to jealousy by another people. The Jews began to contradict Paul. Then Paul says in verse 46: It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. They brought the gospel in the synagogue. There were also Gentiles there. They came to faith, and when the Gentiles come to faith, the Jews no longer need it, and therefore Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles—whereby the situation in Antioch is an illustration of the greater situation whereby salvation was rejected by the Jews and accepted by the Gentiles. And this is exactly what Isaiah spoke: I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth (Acts 13:47. If you look up that text in Isaiah 42 and also 49, you will see that this is not a statement about Paul but about Christ. He would be for a light of the Gentiles and for salvation unto the ends of the earth. What originally applied to the Lord Jesus Christ now proves to apply to the gospel in general and is now

applied to Paul, who is regarded as the personification of that. He is as it were that gospel, he is as it were that light, and he is as it were Christ. Therefore he also says in Romans 15 that it is Christ who wrought by him and still works.
Paul therefore fulfils that exemplary function; he serves as a role model. Not for us in our individual life, but for the whole church, which has moved from Jerusalem to Rome, from the Jews to the Gentiles. Thus the whole book of Acts can be summarised: it began in Jerusalem and ended in Rome. It begins with Jesus in Jerusalem and ends with Paul in Rome. Ultimately it appears that the royal house of the ten tribes had its residence in Rome. They are most probably also the origin of the church there. If any answer can be given to the question who brought the gospel to Rome, it would have to be the British royal house.
Paul therefore brought the gospel to places where it had not yet been preached, as an illustration of this truth that had been announced in the Old Testament—namely that salvation would come to those who asked not after Him.

Romans 15:22
For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.He had already written that in chapter 1:13, in the opening of the epistle. He had often tried to go to Rome but was continually hindered. He was busy preaching the gospel and therefore continually had no opportunity to come to Rome, however much he wanted to. But what would he do in Rome if he wanted to go to places where the gospel had not yet been preached? He would not go to Rome but pass by Rome. That is what he says in the following verses.

Romans 15:23
But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Romans 15:24
Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.
In other words, Paul wanted to travel to Spain and call at Rome on the way, stay there for a while, and then be accompanied by church members from Rome to Spain.
Nowadays we place Spain south of the Pyrenees, but in former times southern France was also reckoned as Spain. By those standards a place like Marseilles was indeed in Spain. He would at any rate travel to western Europe. We know that route, though it is not in the Bible. Whether Paul actually yet travelled to Spain we do not officially know, because it is not in the Bible, but that Charles Martel defeated the Arabs at the Battle of Poitiers in 732 is also not in the Bible. That it was Salome who danced before the king and asked for the head of John the Baptist we also do not know, for that is not in the Bible. Whether Paul was in Spain we can only know from extra-biblical sources. How reliable those sources are you never know quite for sure, but those sources exist. From the Bible we know at any rate that he still intended to travel to Spain. So why not? If in Acts 28:30–31 it stands that Paul was two years in Rome in his own hired house and there preached the kingdom of God, then the history of him ends there on the pages of the Bible, but that of course does not mean he did nothing more afterwards. There is a

good chance he did indeed yet go to Spain and to Britain. According to Acts 22 he would be sent far to the Gentiles.

One Capellus wrote: “I scarcely know of one writer since the times of the fathers who does not assert that Paul, after his release, preached in every country of western Europe, including Britain.” In other words, everyone knew it and everyone wrote about it, but it later disappeared from our history books, especially from our church history books. That stands to reason, because in the course of time Rome had an interest in making that city the residence of Christendom. If someone like Paul had extensively been to the west, you therefore wonder with what authority Rome can still speak. Everything that could undermine the authority of Rome has been hushed up or concealed. Hence also in the days of the Reformation, when the authority of Rome was denied by the Protestants, church history was rewritten. All the different directions that then arose within Protestantism have all rewritten their own church history again. We no longer know all that, but that is how it went. Then came the Counter-Reformation, in which Rome defended itself. Then too Rome rewrote its church history, of course to underpin the authority of Rome again. Cardinal Baronius was especially charged with that. Fortunately he was historically quite reliable, so that he also wrote some things that do not exactly underpin the authority of Rome. And therefore we know through Baronius, who in turn quoted many older writers, that about four years after the resurrection of Christ Joseph of Arimathea arrived in Britain with a company of twelve people to bring the gospel there. They received from the British royal house their domicile, a piece of land of their own, on which officially the first church building ever was built. That was in Glastonbury, which was then still called Avalon. That tradition is strong, but it did not make our history books. Hence it is so unknown.

Henry VIII was not allowed to divorce for the umpteenth time from the pope, whereupon he said he had nothing to do with the pope. Thus the Anglican Church came into being. The church separated itself from Rome. Henry VIII also had arguments for it. He said he indeed had nothing to do with Rome, for in the days of the apostles the gospel was preached here in Britain and Britain was Christianised. In short, there was already a church here before there was any church in Rome at all. He was completely right in that. That he used those arguments for his own purposes is beside the point here. All this indeed has nothing to do with our personal salvation, but what it does concern is the truth. It concerns the whole truth and nothing but the truth.
That Paul visited Britain after his release is taught among others by Bishop Burgess, Baronius, Elford, Archbishop Ussher, Gibson, Cave, Nelson, and so on. Most of those names are English, because on the continent people generally want to hear nothing of it. On the continent church history is reasonably unreliable, but in England it is well documented.
Fernantius Fortunatus speaks of Britain as evangelised by Paul. Theodoret (AD 435): “Paul, having been freed from his first imprisonment in Rome, preached the gospel to the Britons and other countries in the west.” The same Theodoret wrote in his commentary on 2 Timothy 4:21, where Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia are named, the last three all belonging to the British royal house in Rome: “When Paul was sent by Festus at his request to Rome, he travelled after his release to Spain and from there extended his journeys to other countries and to the islands surrounded by the sea.”

Paul's intended journey to Spain he will undoubtedly have undertaken, and it certainly did not stop there. Thus in his life too it was illustrated how salvation came to the ten tribes of Israel. That is officially a mystery and that is probably also the reason it is not openly found in the Bible. It was not the intention that this should be proclaimed from the housetops, but it is after all the great work God is now doing. Just as every time the name Joseph appears and disappears in biblical history, so we find this too. It is offered, but no more words are said about it.
But we, as children of God who seek the truth and should be led into all truth, should learn to understand these things.
It may not be necessary for our salvation, but if the Lord shows us such things and we reject them, then our salvation probably suffers damage thereby. You cannot with impunity ignore what the Lord shows you, wherein the Spirit leads you (in the biblical sense of the word). Whether we find it useful or not has nothing to do with it. It also saves you quite a few complicated questions, such as if the gospel is intended for Israel and the Jews reject it and then it goes to the Gentiles, what about those ten tribes? Are they not also Israel? If the Jews reject it, there are always still ten tribes left, to whom quite a lot was also promised. Not only because they are Israel but also because they are the bearers of the birthright of Israel. So how reliable is the Bible actually, and how reliable then are the promises of God? This is the answer: God fulfils them.
Romans 15:25
But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.
This epistle was written from Corinth, from Cenchrea—that is the eastern port city of Corinth. Instead of travelling on to Spain, he goes in exactly the opposite direction. That is probably also the reason for writing this letter. For he is going to Jerusalem, to the east.
To minister unto the saints = he was going to deliver a collection.

Romans 15:26
For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.
He therefore collected in Macedonia and Achaia. Macedonia is the northern part of what we now call Greece, and Achaia the southern part. It obviously concerns the believers there.
This is nevertheless rather astonishing—that on the mission field a collection is taken for the home front. The believers in Jerusalem appear to have been poor. In Acts chapters 2, 4, and 5 it stands that they had possessions and sold them because there was need of liquid assets. When you then spend your money, you become poor. That is exactly what happened to the believers in Jerusalem. They had become so poor that a collection had to be taken for them even abroad. Paul went with money from the Gentiles to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem to assist them. This history also stands in 1 Corinthians 16 and thereafter in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (two whole chapters about a collection!). Why does that stand in the Bible and at such length? Because it illustrates how thoroughly the roles were reversed. In the end nothing came of that whole church in Jerusalem. It completely disappeared, just like Jerusalem in those days. Salvation would be taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. You also read in Acts 15 that the roles were reversed. There Peter says in the presence of the other apostles that we, the Jews, must be saved in the same way as they, the Gentiles. Not the Jews are the norm,

but the Gentiles. If mission is a biblical principle at all, then it should in the first place be mission by Gentiles among the Jews. That used to happen and was also called that: Jewish mission. Not much remains of that. It still exists, but it is little compared with 100 or 200 years ago. Thus through Gentiles, through people of uncircumcised lips, the gospel is preached to the Jewish people.
That reversal is illustrated here in that collection.

Romans 15:27
It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.
The Gentiles have become partakers of the spiritual possessions of the Jews. The Gentiles have become partakers of the blessings of the Jewish people and therefore they are also obliged in a material sense to contribute to the welfare of the believers from the Jews in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:28
When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.
When he shall have delivered the proceeds of the collection in Jerusalem, he will yet travel to Spain and call at Rome on the way.
Through the contribution Paul delivers he would in a sense make the Jews in Jerusalem subject to the Gentiles, after which he would yet begin again from Jerusalem, for from Jerusalem he would yet go to Rome. That is the whole history of the book of Acts. It begins in Jerusalem and ends in Rome. It begins with the Jews and ends with the Gentiles in general and the British royal house in particular.
Although he was warned not to travel to Jerusalem, for it would not go well with him there, he went nevertheless. He met there only enmity. A tumult arose and he was taken prisoner, dragged before the Sanhedrin, who would have murdered him, were it not that the Roman, the Gentile garrison commander, would have rescued him from the hands of the Jews and led him up the stairs (to a higher position) to the castle Antonia, from the temple court upward to the castle, where Paul at the top of the stairs asked whether he might say something. Thus from a Gentile position, from the castle Antonia, he addressed the Jews in Hebrew. Thereafter they brought him into the castle to rescue him from the Jews.
He remained a prisoner all the way to Rome. He therefore made the whole journey from Jerusalem to Rome as a prisoner, as an exile, as one shut out—a Gentile from a Jewish point of view, for the gospel was committed to the Gentiles. Salvation and the priesthood belonging to it was taken from Judah and given to the Gentiles. Thus it disappeared from Jerusalem and came to Rome, in the British palace, the Palatium Britannicum, there where the church in Rome had its seat. The palace of Caradoc and his daughter Claudia and son-in-law Pudens, his son Linus, who are all named in 2 Timothy 4:21. Linus was most probably the first bishop of Rome, for whether Peter had anything to say there is still a question. It was the house of Linus. If you want to know why those names stand in the Bible, you look up the history and you come across these things naturally.

The Spaniards were Iberians, of the Iberian peninsula—that is the Hebrew peninsula. Iberians are Hebrews, not through the two but through the ten tribes of Israel.

Romans 15:29
And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.
Paul looks forward to going to Rome and he knows almost for certain that he will come there and that it will be with the fulness of blessing. As far as his visit to Jerusalem is concerned, he dreaded it greatly and therefore also asks them to pray for him.

Exhortation to Intercession

Romans 15:30
Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Romans 15:31
That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;
Which unbelievers in Judaea? Is he speaking of utterly unbelieving inhabitants of Judaea, of unbelieving Jews, or is he speaking of the believers there? If we do not know, we strike it out. Whom was he actually going to? He was going to the believers in Judaea, for with the unbelievers he had nothing to do anyway. He was going there to the Christian community. He calls them disobedient. Evidently they were not very obedient to the word of God. In Jerusalem he would not only have to deal with religious but unbelieving Jews, but obviously also with the regenerate people there. That church, however, has no good reputation in the Bible (see for example Galatians 2).In Jerusalem there were originally many believers. They were the first Christian community, but although they had come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety and Mediator of the New Covenant, they clung to the Old Covenant. Hence in Acts 15 you have that discussion in Jerusalem about whether believers from the Gentiles should not also be brought under the Jewish laws, whereupon Peter said it should be the other way round. The law was a yoke that neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear, and therefore the Jews should be saved in the same way as the Gentiles. Even Peter had difficulty letting go of his Judaistic way of life or identity (see again Galatians 2), as so many Jews also in our days have difficulty with that and therefore also refuse to be called Christians, though they believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ. They avoid the term Christ because it is Greek, and they avoid the name Jesus—not only because it is a Greek name, for they would rather not hear it in Hebrew either. They naturally have difficulty escaping that, but still. They call themselves Messianic Jews. However that may be, if they are believers, then they are Christians. There is simply no getting around that.
The problem of those Christians in Jerusalem was therefore that they clung to their Jewish identity. That should nevertheless be let go, for we are delivered from the law. Paul dreaded going there. Therefore he asks for prayer that he may be delivered from these disobedient ones. Where the law reigns, grace does not reign; where the law reigns, there is no liberty. Where the law reigns, there is scarcely any room for the

preaching of the New Covenant. On closer inspection that is not only so in Jerusalem but also with us in the Netherlands. People mistake law for gospel. They confuse faith with religion. That stands diametrically opposed. You should distinguish them and make the corresponding choice.
So it did not go in Jerusalem. Paul was taken prisoner and thereby placed outside Jewish society, for that is captivity. Captivity is not so much imprisonment but rather exclusion. Therefore in the Bible captivity and exile are completely the same. Paul went clearly with good intentions, expressed in a certain sum of money, to Jerusalem, but the result was that he was taken prisoner. And so he came to Rome, to Claudia, Pudens, and Linus and however else they were all called. This is still the situation. The gospel was rejected by the Jews but came to the Gentiles. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
What we find in the last verses of this epistle to the Romans is essentially the same as what we find in the last verses of the book of Acts. There it is summarised in one sentence: Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear (Acts 28:28. That then takes place in Rome, where Paul speaks with the Jewish leaders in Rome about the gospel and how it is with the kingdom. Then the Jews fell into dispute (for if you live under the law you always have disputes—not only in Jerusalem and Rome but also in the Netherlands). Because Christendom for the most part consists of living under the law, Christians therefore always have disputes with one another. Hence all those church walls. Then there must again be dialogue, for those church walls should not be there. Instead of simply abolishing religion and coming to faith and living by faith, that business always continues. We who do not live under the law clash with that sort of people, just like people from the world. You never do it right because people cling to law. We should come to faith in and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the end of the law for everyone that believeth. In Him we have our peace. That is weakly expressed, for He is our peace.

Romans 15:32
That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Romans 15:33
Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.
As already said earlier, peace is characteristic of the New Covenant, just like grace and love. If you seek peace, then you must be with the High Priest of the New Covenant, who sits upon the throne of grace. He is the God of peace, not the God of strife. May that God be with you all.
The Jews greet one another with “shalom,” and if you hear how they pronounce it, you also know that they know that peace does not come. They do not believe in it—you hear it at once. The Bible says: They cry peace, but there is no peace, and peace will not come. Peace comes only through the Prince of Peace. If you seek peace, there is but one way and that goes through the Lord Jesus Christ—not through religion but through faith in Him. Amen.
The end of the epistle, you would think, but a few closings still follow. Evidently Paul keeps adding something.

Romans 16 - Personal Greetings and Closing Remarks

The epistle to the Romans is usually divided into three sections, namely:
Chapters 1–8
Chapters 9–11
Chapters 12–16.
You could also divide the letter into two parts: chapters 1–15 and chapter 16. This final chapter adds hardly anything to the doctrinal teaching of the preceding fifteen chapters. We mainly know this chapter as “the affectionate greetings,” though they are very extensive. Greetings are sent to as many as thirty-two people, believers in Rome, even though Paul had never yet been to Rome. This naturally raises the question of what his exact relationship was with that church in Rome, for he evidently knew many of them. How is it that Paul knew so many people in Rome, and why did he so greatly desire to visit Rome?
In general Paul may have known those people, but we in general do not know them, except for one or two. Most of them we do not meet again in the Bible. Some of them we do meet outside the Bible. People have always tried to keep the Bible separate from reality and therefore also from history. That is of course absurd and is possible only if the Bible is a book of fairy tales. The problem with this chapter is that we find references to the rest of history, a continuation of biblical history, which is therefore not mentioned in the Bible but in church history. That is also a difficult term, because it likewise assumes it has nothing to do with general or national history. Such terminology has always been misused and often gives the wrong impression.
The problem therefore is that we have no way of knowing most of these people. Be that as it may, Paul sent them greetings, from which we may conclude that he evidently maintained a close relationship with these people in Rome. It may of course be that he had met them elsewhere in the world. That at any rate applies to Aquila and Priscilla, who are named in verse 3. When Paul was in Corinth he met Aquila there, who like him was a tentmaker. That naturally soon creates a bond. They took him into their home. Later we meet Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus (Acts 18). When Paul left there, Apollos came to preach there, and the way of God was explained to him more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla. But now they are in Rome.
We do not know exactly how their history fits together. We do know that they were once expelled from Rome. When Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome, they too had to leave and evidently ended up in Corinth. Here they are back in Rome. We never know whether it was before or after. What we do know of them is that wherever they were they always cared for the believers, and the believers also gathered with them, or at any rate they organised the gatherings and were therefore responsible for the domestic arrangements. Wherever they were—whether in Rome, Corinth, or Ephesus. That evidently was their ministry. There is something to learn from that. Some say that it does state the believers gathered at their house, but that the church was still so small that they did not yet have their own church buildings. They mean by that that there was not yet any clear church organisation, church jurisdiction, and discipline. It is, however, far too hasty to say that, for such things do not appear at all in the whole Bible. If you want to know how it works with believers and their fellowship, then you have only this information: that there were individual believers who took the initiative and invited the believers into their homes. Perhaps they even hired a room for it, but where it was is of

course of no importance whatsoever. In the whole New Testament you find nothing else. Very simple. That also stands to reason, for believers do not form a grouping in this world and are also not a legal person. Things like church law are therefore complete nonsense in the Bible. What people do besides is therefore un-biblical and often also contrary to the Bible. Not always, but often enough. If there is anything we can learn from this chapter, then it is this.

Romans 16:1
I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:
Evidently this Phebe delivered this letter of Paul in Rome. This is a recommendation for the bearer of the letter.
Paul writes this letter from Corinth. That is a large port city in the middle of Greece. There in Greece where Achaia is separated from Macedonia. It lies more or less on the sea. It is a trading place and a port. But in reality the port is not Corinth but Cenchrea (Acts 18:18.

Romans 16:2
That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.If she has any need, take care of her.
Succourer = in the NBG translation this word in Romans 12:8 is translated as leader. In that sense Phebe would therefore have given leadership to Paul. That seems unthinkable. Succourer therefore does not mean someone who gives leadership. A succourer is someone who stands in front and therefore bears responsibility.

Romans 16:3
Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:
They were therefore Paul's helpers in Corinth, in Ephesus, and in Rome, in the sense that they all stood in the service of the Lord and were therefore fellow servants. They were fellow servants of Christ Himself.

Romans 16:4
Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
They had risked their own lives for Paul. Paul is indebted to them, for humanly speaking they had saved his life. Thereby all the churches of the Gentiles are also indebted to them.

Romans 16:5
Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.
Greet also the church in their house, implying that believers gathered at their home, or that they arranged a meeting place for the gatherings.
The general thought is that they were of Jewish origin and that converted Jews gathered there. They had the same background and the same culture. They had much in common and therefore sought one another out. That is normal. Although there is no distinction in

the church, it can of course be very good that certain people seek one another out because they have much in common.
The conclusion usually drawn from these verses is that believers gathered at the house of Aquila and Priscilla and that they were chiefly Jews, in distinction from what in verse 4 is called the churches of the Gentiles.
When it then says “Greet also the church in their house,” this means that the letter was not originally delivered to them but elsewhere in Rome, evidently to a church that consisted chiefly of believers from the Gentiles. However strong the contact was between Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla, the letter is not delivered to them. The question therefore is where the letter was delivered and why that is not mentioned. The Roman Catholic Church says it must have been Peter, whom they after all regard as the first bishop of Rome. This, however, seems highly unlikely, because Peter himself was also a Jew. That therefore lies rather difficult. It would have stood to reason that Peter would also have been with the church of Aquila and Priscilla.
We therefore do not know, but also we do not want to know. The believers from the Gentiles were undoubtedly under the leadership and protection of the British royal house in Rome. If this sounds like a fairy tale, that is because we do not know it. In the days of Claudius Britain was finally conquered, which had not succeeded under Julius Caesar. Part of the British royal house was taken captive to Rome, where they incidentally had their own residence long before that, simply through international contacts. That is so now, but it was already so in those days.
The Britons are in particular the heirs of the tribe of Ephraim. The gospel therefore went in particular to the royal house of the Britons. They came to conversion through the ministry first of all of Joseph of Arimathea.
That church there in Rome from the Gentiles is the fulfilment of quite a lot of Old Testament prophecy.
Greet my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.
Corinth is the capital of Achaia, from where the letter was written. Evidently Epaenetus was one of the first believers in Achaia, but he had gone to Rome. We do not know whether that was on Paul’s instructions. We simply do not know the reason. He does not appear again.

Romans 16:6
Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.
Again a Mary. There are quite a few Marys, and when you hear the name Mary you should immediately think of the ten tribes of Israel. That is so throughout the whole Bible, also in the Old Testament, where she is then called Miriam. She is always a picture of that beloved people on earth. Sometimes also outside the camp, sometimes also leprous, sometimes also alone, but then yet always resulting in a meeting with the risen Christ, for that is what it comes down to in practice. It is not for nothing that one Joseph was the legal father of the Lord Jesus and one Mary the legal mother of the Lord Jesus, for both those names in the Bible refer to this history of the ten tribes of Israel, who could not endure under the law, but when the gospel was preached to them they were the first to come to faith and thereby became firstborn under the New Covenant. The whole birthright of the church is based on that. That is therefore indeed important.

The weight that hangs on such a name comes to the fore here. We do not know who this Mary is, but that name has a certain meaning. That happens throughout the whole Bible.

Romans 16:7
Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow
prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
Andronicus = from Nike = conqueror. The man who conquers.
Junia = Jehovah continues.
We know no more about these people.
My kinsmen = my relatives. In the broadest sense of the word it means they were Jews, but perhaps they were also closer family of Paul. That would at any rate explain why he sends them greetings. Paul had rather a large family. Thus he had a nephew who was a spy. There was a conspiracy against Paul. He then reported it to the garrison commander. The result was that Paul was taken to Caesarea. How that family relationship exactly was we still do not know.

Romans 16:8
Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.
Amplias = enlarged, extended, exalted.
Amplifier = amplifier. One who enlarges, extends, and in this case amplifies sound.

Romans 16:9
Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.
We also do not know these people. Much more happened in Paul's life of which we have no idea.
Urbane = of the city (especially Rome). Hence it also had the meaning of civilised, well-mannered.

Romans 16:10
Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.
Greet those of Aristobulus. Household does not stand there. Perhaps it is his house. In that case that could also have been a local church in Rome. Rome was already a large city in those days. There could therefore well have been several house churches. Nevertheless it seems more likely that it indeed concerns the household of Aristobulus and that there were only two churches in Rome: one from the Jews, under the leadership of Aquila and Priscilla, and the other from the Gentiles, under the leadership of the British royal house.
Here then greetings are sent to the family of Aristobulus. We also do not meet him again in the Bible, but we do in extra-biblical history. He appears to have been one of the most important people in bringing the gospel to Britain.
Gildas, a British cleric and writer from the sixth century, regarded as one of the most prominent historians of Britain, wrote: "We know with certainty that Christ, the true Son, brought His light to the island in the last year of Tiberius (AD 37 = four years after the resurrection of Christ)." He also writes: "Joseph introduced Christianity to Britain in the last year of the reign of Tiberius." He means Joseph of Arimathea, but simply says Joseph. He also says: "The first martyr in Britain, however, was Aristobulus, brother of

Barnabas (who was originally called Joseph). Barnabas, of Cyprus, who had a field, sold it and brought the proceeds to the disciples. He later became the mentor of Paul. Saul went to learn from Barnabas and introduced him to missionary work.
”Once again: “The first martyr in Britain, however, was Aristobulus, brother of Barnabas and father-in-law of Peter.”
Aristobulus was the brother of Barnabas and father-in-law of Peter. A cousin of theirs was again John Mark, who also went on that first missionary journey of Barnabas and Paul but later returned.
Aristobulus was put to death in Saint Albans, in the year AD 59. The date is given as 17 March of that year.
That is the day of Aristobulus, bishop of Britain, brother of St Barnabas the apostle, by whom he was appointed bishop. He was sent to Britain, where after preaching the truth of Christ and forming a church he suffered martyrdom (from one of the books of martyrs). Such things have often not penetrated to us because we on the continent are oriented toward Rome.
Greet those of Aristobulus. He was not at home, but the family was.
Moreover he was a brother of Barnabas, who was a very good acquaintance of Paul. Hence Paul sends greetings. And if Aristobulus himself went to Britain, how do you think his family in Rome was maintained? It stands to reason that there were contacts with the British royal house, who were officially prisoners in Rome and in any case were not allowed to leave for the first seven years.

Romans 16:11
Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.
Herodion, once again a relative of Paul. We do not know him, any more than we know Narcissus. Evidently we may draw the same conclusion as with Aristobulus. The family is present in Rome, but they themselves have set out. At any rate Narcissus. They are in the Lord. It naturally concerns the fellowship of believers, who greet one another.

Romans 16:12
Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.
Three sisters whom we do not know.

Romans 16:13
Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.
Who is this Rufus? And who is the mother of Rufus, who is also the mother of Paul? If we look around in Rome in those days, we do indeed find one Rufus = redhead.
The Rufus we know was called in full Rufus Pudens Pudentius. The father of Pudens was therefore also called Pudens. He does appear in the Bible, but not under the name Rufus, but under the name Pudens. He was married to one Claudia. Both appear in 2 Timothy 4:21, in which Linus is also named. Linus was one of the sons of Caradoc, the king of the Silures, the British prince who lived in exile in Rome. The sister of Linus was Claudia (Gladys = princess in Celtic). She was married to Rufus Pudens Pudentius. There is a whole extended story attached to how they met, how the wedding took place, on the occasion of which some poems were written that have been handed down to us,

in which Gladys is the blue-eyed British princess. Claudia, the British princess, married to a Roman; believers, incidentally. The brother-in-law of Pudens was therefore Linus, who in the Roman Catholic Church is named as the second pope, the first pope after Peter. Now we do not believe in popes, but you may nevertheless assume that these are names of people who meant something to the believers in Rome. This means that in the course of time the church of Rome came under the leadership of the British prince in the British palace. That made him bishop of Rome. It also explains why this Rufus is called the chosen one, for either all believers are chosen, or this man is chosen in the specific sense of the term. The normal Greek meaning of the term includes that of a noble title. The well-born. He was a Roman senator and married to a British princess and therefore belonged to the British royal family. After the return of Caradoc, his father-in-law, to Britain, the palace was left to this couple. This is history.
Most probably Claudia is named once more in the Bible, in 1 John, where the name is withheld from us, but she is called the chosen lady. Apart from the figurative meaning you may ask who that lady must have been. If it figuratively concerns the church as such, it is not exaggerated to conclude that this chosen lady also stood at the head of the church in those days. By horizontal standards that was undoubtedly Claudia, residing in the Palatium Britannicum, which is still regarded as the first church building on the continent, with the exception therefore of Britain, for there was already much earlier a church building in Glastonbury, founded by Joseph of Arimathea.

Romans 16:13
Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.
It appears that Rufus and Paul were brothers, not of the same father but of the same mother. Some spiritualise that, but what then is a spiritual mother? Then she would have to be the woman through whom Paul came to faith. It is quite certain that this was not the case. He came to faith through the direct intervention of the Lord Jesus Himself. There is therefore no room here for spiritualising.
We do not know what the mother of Paul was called, but we do know the name of the mother of Rufus—namely Priscilla. Evidently she had been married twice, or at least had children by two men. The chance is therefore very great that Saul of Tarsus was related to the British royal house, with a palace in Rome. How is it that Paul so greatly wanted to go to Rome and how he was so well informed about affairs in Rome? He knew many people, but moreover had family there. And why could he so easily appeal to the emperor? Most probably because he had friends in high places. He also mentions in 2 Timothy 4 the household of Caesar. It almost seems as though he was at home there. If Paul is related to the British prince, then he was treated there with respect. That is all the more an indication that he was released. He had good connections.
The thought is that his father died young and his mother remarried in Rome to one Pudens, from which marriage children were also born, so that this Rufus was a half-brother of Paul.
A catacomb in Rome is also named after this Priscilla, the mother therefore of both Paul and Rufus.

Romans 16:14
Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

Hermas we know from history as Hermas Pastor. He wrote a book entitled “Pastor” = the shepherd. He was one of the stewards, administrators, of the British palace in Rome. Through the names we know from history we keep coming to the British royal family, who by their position were able to provide accommodation for the believers there.The other named persons are unknown to us.

Romans 16:15
Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.
All unknown.

Romans 16:16
Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.
The churches of Christ send greetings to the church in Rome. It is not for nothing that people later tried to make Rome the centre of Christendom, on the basis of which the Roman Catholic Church developed, for by biblical standards you would think Rome is the centre of Christendom. Everything revolves around it, everyone goes there, everyone is sent out from there. To a large extent that was also so, but in reality it concerned the British royal family in exile in Rome. In reality it goes even further back, for the gospel was first preached in Britain itself and from there went back toward the mainland of Europe and gained a seat in Rome. There are quite a few biblical figures who preached the gospel here on the mainland of Europe, but of almost all it is known that they first travelled to Britain, to Avalon. From there they were sent out over Europe and from there they came to Rome. In reality salvation therefore came from Britain. So it has always remained, up to our days. At any rate up to the last century.

Romans 16:17
Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
Not against one another, but against the doctrine. It does not concern our well-being and certainly not unity within an organisation we ourselves have established and try to maintain. It concerns being faithful to the word. To what was taught us by God. That is difficult enough. We have lost quite a lot of the history, but also of the doctrine. That is why Romans 9–11 is such a difficult section. We have lost too much, under the motto that it does not contribute to our personal salvation anyway. Moreover it only causes division. So what use is it? Nowadays we still hop and shout a bit and say: “Praise the Lord,” but in content we no longer even know who that Lord is.
Paul warns against that. What you have heard from me, commit that to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. Paul is greatly concerned that people lose the truth along the way. That is unfortunately how it went in church history. At the time of the great revolutions within the church people suddenly rediscovered biblical truth. We can therefore better occupy ourselves with recovering what we have evidently forgotten, if only because it is to the honour of God, who has given us the Holy Spirit who will lead us into all truth.

Romans 16:18
For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.
Those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ. They serve their own belly, their old man.
Preacher is such a word. He is expected to speak well. But it concerns what about. It does not concern that you can say it well, but whether the truth is spoken. It is nice if someone can speak well, but it concerns first of all that the word of God is spoken.
They deceive by good words and fair speeches the hearts of the simple. The simple are impressed by the form and therefore swallow the content.
We are warned against that. They are cleverly contrived fables. Well said, but fairy tales.

Romans 16:19
For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.The believers in Rome are known for their obedience, for their faith, their faithfulness.They should be wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil.
Simple = ignorant.
We need not be taught in evil, but we should be taught in good, with the result...

Romans 16:20
And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.
Shortly = suddenly, from one moment to the next. Ultimately that happens definitively and on a large scale at the rapture of the church, which is accompanied by the casting down of Satan. That does not mean that even in our days, while we are still in the flesh, we are more than conquerors in Christ. We should thereby be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, or as it stands elsewhere: Resist the devil, submit yourselves to God, and he will flee from you (James 4:7.The world is in the power of Satan. We do not belong to it and therefore we have the victory over that adversary. One thing and another is pictured by the position of the British royal house in Rome. They were in Rome, but they do not belong there. They belonged on that island. To this day the thought prevails among the British that they do not really belong. European unity? But we do not join the euro. Meanwhile they have decided to leave that European community as well. According to quite a few Britons the continent is Roman Catholic and they do not belong to Rome. Henry VIII was not the first and certainly not the last to think that. That is in reality the picture of the position of the church. We are here, but we do not belong here. The world lies in the power of the wicked one, but we are not of the world and we do not strive for a place in the world. That is not necessary either, for you already have that place in the world. Our struggle is precisely to escape from it and in that struggle we should be conquerors. Not to find recognition in the world, but to find recognition with the Lord whom we serve. This is not rhetoric but essential biblical truth.If we remain faithful to the doctrine, then the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly and then the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with us. Amen. Only if one is faithful to the Lord.
Thereby you receive no recognition from the world. Christendom has been persecuted for hundreds of years. Even now it happens on a large scale, especially in Muslim

countries. At other times and places the devil no longer opposed Christendom but annexed it, from one moment to the next, by the conversion of Emperor Constantine. Then Christendom was suddenly elevated to state religion. If it then grows against all odds and becomes so strong that it cannot be suppressed, then you must see to it that you get it into your possession, under the motto: if you can't beat them, join them. That is how it went and thereby Christendom came into a stranglehold. To this day it is thought that Christendom should have standing in the world and be regarded as a world religion. We Christians do not belong to the world. The normal situation is that Christians wherever in the world are persecuted. That also happens today, though people have become somewhat indifferent and it has become somewhat more difficult to locate true Christians. The term Christendom has long been corrupted and acquired a different content. That confusion also grows day by day. But we do not belong to world Christendom but are Christians in the biblical sense of the word. We do not belong to a club but to Christ. We are joined to Him. He is our hope and He is our life. He lives His life in us. We do not surrender to an organisation but to our Lord and Saviour, who would do His work in us, to the glory of God and to our glory.
If salvation history once came to Rome, just as at the end of the book of Acts, that does not mean the story ends there, not even in history. It would continue. Something would always be added. Even in content this epistle is not finished. Precisely because of the systematic character of this epistle you expect it to be a rounded whole. It is not, for it stops doctrinally at the resurrection of Christ. The story is obviously not finished there, for more follows. In fact it only begins there. At His resurrection He was appointed Son and High Priest. But then? Then follows indeed His ascension and His heavenly work in this present time. After that follows still His earthly work in the future. None of that is discussed in this epistle. In this epistle it does not go further than that He is risen from the dead and that He has meanwhile hidden Himself. Moreover He first took salvation from Jerusalem and deposited it with the Britons in Rome. He gave that salvation to the ten tribes of Israel, took it from the Jews and gave it to the Gentiles. But how now further? That is not all in the epistle. In chapter 11 it just stood that the mercy shown to the Gentiles will in the future be shown by the Gentiles also to the Jewish people and that hardening has in part come upon Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Details about that are not given, however. The story is therefore not finished. There always follows a postscript and something is always added. After this epistle we come to other epistles that do go further than the epistle to the Romans. Hence this literary form of closing and then it simply continues.
If you then finally come to Romans 16:27, the question is how it now continues. That is precisely the intention. It does continue, in the epistle to the Ephesians, or by another route, in the epistle to the Hebrews. Both epistles may be regarded as a logical continuation of the epistle to the Romans.
However that may be, we should be wise in what is good and simple in what is evil. If that is so, then the God of peace will be with us and will bruise Satan under our feet shortly. That is obviously only at the coming again of Christ, after the rapture of the church and the appointment of the church as son and heir.
Now we get not greetings to, but greetings from…

Romans 16:21
Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.
Evidently these people are with Paul in Corinth as he writes this letter.
Timotheus was a fellow worker of Paul. He was at any rate not a blood relative. Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater evidently were. They are at least Jews, but perhaps they are also related to Paul in another way. We do not know, for we do not know these people further.

Romans 16:22
I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.
The letter was indeed written by Paul. He was probably already quite advanced in years when writing this letter. Perhaps his eyes had meanwhile become so bad that he could no longer see it all well and he asked Tertius to write down the words he dictated. Evidently he was a sort of secretary to Paul.

Romans 16:23
Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.
It appears that Paul lodged at Gaius's house at the time he wrote this letter and even that the believers gathered at the house of this Gaius.
It is rather remarkable that in verse 22 you have a Tertius and in verse 23 a Quartus. You then wonder where Secundus has gone and whether perhaps a Quintus is still coming. We do not know why these people are so named, because we simply know nothing about them.
The letter is now closed for the third time.

Romans 16:24
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
It does not say: The law of Jesus Christ be with you all. The grace of the New Covenant would be with us. In this epistle no mention is made of the position of Christ as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec upon the throne of grace in heaven. If you want to know more about that, you logically come to the epistle to the Hebrews.
Now comes an important statement, also in a complicated formulation. A part of communication in antiquity went not only by what was said but also by how things were said, with a certain structure. So also here. Why is this epistle so often closed and why is the last time such a clear postscript, which ultimately falls quite outside the nature of the epistle? There is a reason for that. In these last verses reference is made to a continuation of the epistle. That indeed happens in a remarkable way, in which the nature of what is still to come is also illustrated. Not with the words themselves, but with the sentence structure.

Romans 16:25
Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Romans 16
The sentence begins, but immediately hangs after the little word “now.” Then the parenthetical clauses start. Commas are there to separate parenthetical clauses from the main clause. You need them to be able to read (aloud) a sentence properly in one go.
Now to Him… where does the sentence continue? In verse 27: To Him be glory for ever. Amen. The main clause is therefore: To Him be glory.
That is of course an important truth, but the importance lies in the parenthetical clauses. That is a form for which Paul evidently chooses, in which he hides the essence of what he is saying in parenthetical clauses, which he is expected first to set aside in order to hold on to the main clause. In this case the main clause does not amount to much, except that it is naturally important that glory be given to Him. But the emphasis lies on the parenthetical clauses. They are wrapped up. What he mentions in those parenthetical clauses is indeed the continuation of this epistle. That is a different story from what is discussed in this epistle.
The gospel to which Paul was separated, which is not veiled and of which he is not ashamed, is systematically set forth and explained in this epistle. That is where it stops. It concerns a message to man in general, about the righteousness of God which is revealed in the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. But then, when one believes? That is only briefly indicated, but the essence of the story—that God in our days gathers a people out of the Gentiles for His name, that He does so in secret, and that all aspects of that work are not revealed to the world but remain hidden among the believers who have opened their lives to the word of God—that is another matter. He just touches the edge of it, for example in Romans 9–11. The difficulty people generally have with these chapters is probably caused by the fact that Paul does not describe their essence in a few sentences. He still keeps it hidden. He does not do so because it is truth not at all intended for the world. To find it, you must search rather more seriously and also compare Scripture with Scripture. Paul speaks about such matters here at the end of the epistle, which he has already closed three times and our attention has long since waned.

Romans 16:25
Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,
To Him be glory. Who is this He to whom glory would be given? It is He who is able to establish you, which means nothing if He did not also do it, under certain conditions. It stands that He is able to do so, because not everyone is established. It also depends on us whether we want that. He is also able to keep us from stumbling. He is able to establish us, in accordance with the gospel that Paul preaches—namely the preaching of Jesus Christ. For we should not look at ourselves but at Him and thereby be changed into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18. If that preaching is not about the Lord, it is no gospel.
According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began. Paul’s preaching is a preaching of the gospel, a preaching of Jesus Christ, but He is the One who hides Himself from the world. Peter says that you can read in the Old

Testament about the Messiah, but in two parts. One part concerns His suffering, death, and resurrection, but the other part concerns His glory. The question now is what lies between those two. That is the difficulty of the Old Testament prophecies. They do indeed speak about the suffering that would come upon Christ and the glory afterwards, but not about how you go from suffering to glory. The prophecies do not really speak about the period between the first coming of Christ and His coming again. It is mentioned, but the question is what Christ does in that meantime. In the Old Testament it stands about that period that God will utterly hide His face in that day. And that He will do a work in those days which you will not believe though a man declare it unto you. Then you still do not know what work that is. And that is now the characteristic of all the New Testament Bible books; they reveal to us in one way or another these mysteries.
From Matthew to Revelation. Since the resurrection of Christ this hidden work of Christ has begun. Therefore in the Bible books written since the resurrection of Christ these things are made known. They reveal to us the mystery. They reveal to us what was not explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament. It is not explicitly named, though you can draw some conclusions from certain Scripture passages. It is as it were folded in and you can deduce it from there. A part is not told. God keeps His mouth shut about it, because it is not the intention that the whole world should know it. It is intended only for those who would also have a part in it. It is made known to us.
The technique by which that happens is studying the Bible. Then there is nothing difficult about it and we naturally come to know how it is. If we do not do that, we never find out. That is why many Christians have no idea what the Lord Jesus Christ is doing in our days and because people have no idea of that, they come up with all sorts of plans that the Lord should carry out. People reproach God that He does not do what we think He should do. That happens in Christian circles, but also among atheists: “If there is a God, why does He do nothing about all that misery?” Man has his own plans and thinks God should carry them out. You can only come to such unholy ideas if you do not know what God is doing in these days. People do not know it because they do not want to listen to Him. And vice versa. If they do not want to know it, then God does not grant them to know it. The Bible protects itself in that way.
God is able to establish us in that mystery, to give us a firm place in it, so that those things are no longer hidden to us but revealed.
The mystery is revealed in the preaching. Those are two opposite concepts. In mystery things are covered; a veil comes over them, a covering. In revelation things are uncovered; the covering is removed. In the book of Revelation it also concerns that mystery which is revealed.
Since the world began = former times. It does not mean that there were several times or ages before. It concerns that these things have never before been revealed.

Romans 16:26
But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:
Now = after all that preceded. The mystery is meanwhile made known through the prophetic scriptures to all nations (the believers).

Prophetic scriptures = the New Testament Bible books. The prophetic word is the designation of God's word. All Bible books form part of the prophetic word. Prophecy is not merely foretelling the future but the word of God. The work of a prophet is not to predict the future but to make known the word of God. That God in general speaks about the future is true, but that is a derived truth.
That mystery is now made known according to the commandment of the everlasting God. It is for the obedience of faith = for obedience, namely faith. It is the intention that people should listen to it, that they should believe these prophetic scriptures. It is the intention that they should know and accept this mystery. That mystery is not so much preached among the Jews but among the Gentiles.
The mystery is mentioned several times in the New Testament. Sometimes in general, sometimes more specifically.
In general here in Romans 16:25, then in...
1 Corinthians 2:1
And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.
Testimony, as translation of the word martyrion. That seems a misunderstanding. It should have been mysterion, as it actually stands in some manuscripts. That mystery is also mentioned in verse 7.
1 Corinthians 2:7
But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:
Mystery that was hidden is a pleonasm, for mystery is by definition hidden. That truth lay long established before the world was, but now it is also revealed. Paul preaches that mystery too, but then among mature people—namely among those who want to know it and who want to go the way of God. Next Scripture passage...1 Corinthians 4:1
Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
Stewards = oikonomos = household managers.
Mysteries of God = there is really only one mystery, but it has several aspects and those different aspects are also designated as mystery.
1 Corinthians 13:2
And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
In other words, prophecy since the resurrection of Christ has the purpose of making known this mystery or mysteries. God does not speak anew about all those things that were revealed in the Old Testament, but specifically about the revelation of the things that were not made known in the Old Testament. The book of Revelation is therefore by definition revelation of mystery. That does not mean that Revelation does not indeed mention things that were made known in particular in the book of Daniel. That is therefore no revelation of mystery, because it had already been revealed. But Revelation adds things that were not said in Daniel. Things were therefore omitted there and sometimes implied.
This also means that you can study the book of Daniel, but if you limit yourself to that, you still remain with quite a few questions. Those are then revealed in the book of Revelation. But things that God will establish His kingdom on earth and gather Israel

back to the promised land and make Jerusalem its capital, you do not read that in the New Testament. Well, you do read it, but the New Testament connects with it and adds something to it, but it is not again set forth at length. Hence you must compare those two parts of the Bible and read the Old Testament in the much greater light of the New Testament. The New Testament alone you have little use for, for it is based on what is set forth in the Old Testament. So you have little use for the Old Testament alone either, because what we have become partakers of remains hidden in it.1 Corinthians 14:2
For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.
He who speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not to men but to God. You can speak to men only if they also understand you. Speaking in tongues, in the biblical sense of the term, is therefore indeed prophesying. It is speaking about mysteries, but then in a tongue no one understands. In Acts 2 tongues were also spoken and those who understood said that they spoke of the wonderful works of God in our present time with regard to the calling of the church.
Ephesians 6:19
And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,
Not merely the gospel as such, but the mystery of the gospel. The gospel is that you are justified by grace through faith, but it becomes much more difficult to explain to those who believe that they now form part of a completely different people, a people that does not belong in the world at all. That they now belong to a heavenly people, with a heavenly calling and an inheritance. God is doing a great work in our days. He draws us out of this world. Try explaining that to believers. That is much more difficult than explaining to an unbeliever what the gospel means.
Paul does not ask that prayer be made for him so that he might preach the gospel with boldness, for he had already said of himself that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. He had no difficulty with that at all. What is much more difficult is to explain to believers that their place is precisely not in the world and that we should not strive for recognition by the world. That does not belong to us, for we have been delivered from it. We need no recognition from the world but from the Lord Himself. That is difficult to explain and Paul prays for that.
Colossians 2:2
That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;
We should come to the acknowledgement of the mystery, to the knowledge of Christ, who hides Himself and in secret does a work in which we have a part.
Colossians 4:3
Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
The door of utterance = the mouth.
Paul was imprisoned because of that. The position of Paul is a picture of the position of the whole church. They are shut out, outside society, and they form a separate community together with Christ. You do not literally find that situation in the Old Testament, but figuratively you do. It is for example pictured in the prison in Egypt of

which Joseph was the head; all the prisoners under the care of Joseph, but shut out from Egyptian society. That is our position.
1 Timothy 3:9
Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
Holding = keeping, preserving.
We should keep the mystery of the faith.
The mystery of the faith = the mystery in which we believe and on which we trust.
1 Timothy 3
The Mystery of Godliness
1 Timothy 3:16
And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
All these statements do not refer to God but to the mystery of godliness. Of course God was also manifest in the flesh, but that is not what we are discussing now. These are statements about the mystery of godliness. The word “God” was probably inserted by those who copied the texts, because they did not understand that it concerned the mystery of godliness.
That mystery of godliness is great, and one should know it.
Not all the Scripture passages that speak of the mystery have been mentioned. We shall look at a few more that are rather more specific, because rather more is said about them.
Romans 11:25
For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.This mystery = one aspect, therefore, of the mystery.We have already discussed the verse earlier, but the partial hardening of Israel is therefore one of the aspects of the mystery. As long as Israel is hardened, the Lord hides Himself. While Israel is hardened, the Lord does another work in this present time. See Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10. In all three verses it stands more or less: “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” or: “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,” or: “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.” The idea is that that kingdom was established at the coronation of the Lord Jesus, but that kingdom remains hidden from the world until our days. That kingdom will only be made visible at His coming again and not before.
Ephesians 3:3–12
How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.Paul had already mentioned it earlier, so that you can see that he always knew these things, but he never wrote about them at length.
Revelation 10:7
But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.
At the seventh trumpet there is mention of the definitive establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth, with Jerusalem as residence. Then the mystery is finished, because the kingdom and all its aspects are no longer hidden but fully revealed on earth.
Colossians 1
The Mystery Hidden from Ages
Colossians 1:26
Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:
Colossians 1:27
To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:
This mystery concerns the Gentiles. This mystery has found its dwelling place not among the Jews but among the Gentiles, which corresponds to the fact that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles. Salvation is with the Gentiles and more specifically with the church.
Ephesians 5:30
For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
Ephesians 5:31
For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
Ephesians 5:32
This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
This mystery is great, yet I speak concerning Christ and the church. In the King James Version it stands: But I speak concerning Christ and the church (ekklesia).
What now stands is that the statement from Genesis 2 is applied to Christ and the church, but what really stands is that this statement from Genesis 2 was not applied to Christ and the church, but always concerned Christ and the church. He quotes from Genesis and says that he speaks concerning Christ and the church, but it was about Adam and Eve. That is how the mystery works. It does stand in the Old Testament, but if you do not pay attention, you think it concerns Adam and Eve. That is not so; it immediately concerns the church.
The phenomenon that the woman was made from the body of the man is already there an illustration of how the church is built from a certain aspect of Christ, with the result that everything said about Christ in the Old Testament immediately also speaks about the church. That is not all stated explicitly, but it is so. That is what Paul says here. The whole idea that we are members of the body of Christ, that we have become one plant

with Him, implies that everything said about Him also applies to us, because we have after all become partakers of Him. That may be rather hidden, but that is also what Paul says: “This is a great mystery.”
This also means that statements made strictly about Adam are therefore also applicable to Christ. When God said: Let us make Adam in our image, after our likeness, that was immediately a statement about Christ. That Adam then first appears may be so, but he was not immediately the fulfilment of God’s word and God’s plan. He was only an illustration of it. In the figure and history of Adam and what follows our present New Testament truth lies hidden. That mystery is revealed to us in the New Testament. You can immediately deduce from that that all Old Testament typology by definition speaks about the church. If you study the tabernacle, you cannot escape that it speaks about Christ and the church. When the manna fell from heaven, the Israelites did not know what it was, but it stands what it was—namely the word that the Lord had spoken. In John it also stands explicitly that this is the meaning. The Lord Jesus says that He is that bread that came down from heaven. That speaks about Christ and the church.
The church as the body of Christ is in the Old Testament a mystery.
1 Corinthians 15:51-54
Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
The rapture of the church naturally also forms part of the mystery. In this chapter it speaks about the change of the body through death and resurrection. We should receive an eternal resurrection body, but Paul says that this does not necessarily have to happen through death and resurrection, for we who remain alive unto the coming of the Lord shall indeed be changed without first dying physically. We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Because the rapture of the church forms part of the mystery, you do not find it too often in the Bible. There are a few Scripture passages that mention it explicitly, but many that mention it implicitly, such as that we shall receive glory and that we shall be appointed sons. For that a different body is first needed, for otherwise we shall not inherit. You do not need to die first for that, for if you live until the coming again of Christ, then you receive immediately, together with the believers who have already died, a glorified body.
Up to now we have had the following mysteries:
That of the kingdom of God. This implies that the kingdom does already exist, but is now not of this world. There is a kingdom of Christ, but it is not yet revealed. The less pleasant side of this story is that the kingdom of the devil also now exists, but is also hidden. In Daniel mention is made of the successive world empires, which are generally named as Babylon, of which Babel is regarded as the capital through the ages. And through the ages that was also literally true. Of one of those empires it stands that it differs from all those other empires (Daniel 7). If you look it up, it proves that that empire does not have Babel as capital. The difference is actually much greater, for that world empire would exist for a certain time, but not openly, but in secret. In practice it comes down to the fact that just as the kingdom of Christ is hidden in our days, so also the

kingdom of the devil is hidden. Many do not realise that, but the world is in practice under the dominion of the devil. If you want nothing to do with the God of the Bible and you look in the world for a god, you inevitably end up with the devil, however he presents himself, for he has many forms. He is the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air. That kingdom of his does work through to the surface, but you cannot put your finger on it. The devil works in secret. Hence it is possible that a great deal of his activities are mistakenly attributed to God. Hence all those people who since the resurrection of Christ have tried to build a world empire have all failed. Why? Because that kingdom of the devil would also not come to the surface. He is also limited, just as God is limited in this time. In that limitation God does His work. That people therefore think there is no God may well be so, for God does His work in secret, but the devil also. Paul says that his thoughts are not unknown to us and he then describes very briefly how the devil works. You need know no more than that, for you must know how the Lord does His work. On the one hand there are people who tell us what the Lord does, and on the other hand there are people who tell us what the devil does and what we should especially be afraid of. You can have a full-time job with that. The latter is therefore not necessary, but it is true. He does a great deal, but we should pay no attention to it at all. His kingdom is also indeed called Babel, only it is not yet the literal Babel at this moment. That comes only in the future. Then the devil will first reveal his kingdom and then also Christ. Then the question is which of the two will win. He who has already won will naturally win.

That this hidden kingdom of the devil now exists stands in two Scripture passages.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

2 Thessalonians 2:7

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

In the future he will be revealed, but now he works in secret. As long as the church is still on earth, unrighteousness will not be revealed and his kingdom remains hidden. That this indeed concerns that kingdom of Babel we find in Revelation 17, in which that kingdom is presented as a scarlet beast, governed by a woman who sits upon it. The whore she is called. She is a picture of the great city that has the kingdom over the kings of the earth. Which city that is stands already in verse 5.

Revelation 17:5

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH

It is therefore Babel, but before this is revealed it is called mystery. That is the mystery of iniquity from 2 Thessalonians 2:7. And just as unrighteousness will in the future be revealed in a literal city Babel, so also the kingdom of Christ will in the future be literally revealed in a literal city—namely Jerusalem, which for that purpose will yet be rebuilt in the future, after it has first been destroyed.

This was of course only a brief summary of what follows on the epistle to the Romans. The normal continuation of the epistle to the Romans is Ephesians, in which no longer so much is spoken about the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but about His resurrection and ascension and the consequences thereof. He is raised and set in heaven, and we are raised with Him and set in heaven and there blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ in heaven.

The other logical continuation is the epistle to the Hebrews, which does that through the line of typology. The epistle begins with Christ, who is set at the right hand of God and there set as King and High Priest of the New Covenant after the order of Melchisedec. From those principles we should live. From the work that Christ does in this present time. That is a work He does in secret. He draws us out of an open visible world and gives us a place in an unseen kingdom. There He feeds us, so that we shall hereafter in the future—that is the hope from which we live—be revealed with Christ in glory. If the work of God from our days must be shown to the world, then that does not happen before the coming again of Christ, together with the church. This is an enormously important truth. It relieves us of the idea that we must necessarily mean something in the world. Not that that may not be, but to think that this has to do with the work of God is a misunderstanding. He withdraws us from the world and places us outside it, in heaven, and there He blesses us and does a work in us and feeds us, so that we shall hereafter with Him, after the rapture of the church, be revealed in glory. That is our blessed hope.

Romans 16:27

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

To the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.